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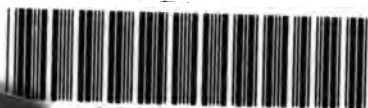
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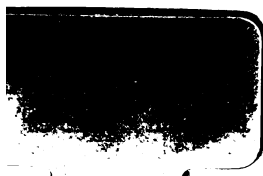








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THOMAS BROWN'S WILL.

THOMAS BROWN'S WILL.

A Novel.

BY
ADOLPHUS POHL.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.



LONDON:

TINSLEY BROTHERS, 8, CATHERINE ST., STRAND.

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THOMAS BROWN'S WILL.

CHAPTER I.

A HUMAN being is launched on the waters of life, a boy, our hero. His horoscope is set by some who have a deep interest in his future career; and by others who have very little, and hardly accompany him a few weeks or months into this strange life, which represents a different phase with every human being, for as there are no two individuals exactly alike, so is the fate of no man identical with that of another.

There are some who ought to take an interest in the boy's birth and who do not. Perhaps a share of interest may be forced upon them hereafter.

What is in a name? Ask young married people when they contemplate the event of christening their first-born. We say first-born advisedly. There are a thousand reasons why the first-born child should be the most interesting. However, as there is no rule

without an exception, so there are interesting children, and consequently interesting men and women, whom fate destined to make their appearance in a family second, or third, or eleventh.

Is our hero to be called only fine-sounding aristocratic names, irrespective of any connecting link with such worldly interests as may be derived from intimate friends of the family, from godfathers in perspective, rich married and unmarried uncles and aunts? There are, for instance, Augustus, Plantagenet, Alexander. Plantagenet Alexander Thompson. That reads very well. It seems almost a necessity to show good taste in the selection of the Christian names to distinguish the child, and afterwards the man, from other Thompsens. It is so with the Smiths. Of course everything has its two sides: its advantages and disadvantages. Julius Cæsar Smith is not so much exposed to having his letters brought to him by the postman after they have been opened by another Smith, as John Smith.

But suppose Julius Cæsar Smith happened to take, on some festive occasion, a "little too much," and were to come into collision with policeman X—one of those positions which are not the less unpleasant on account of their not having been in the least anticipated? "Julius Cæsar Smith"—rather a drawback in the papers, even if, against all likelihood, the magistrate should dismiss the case with the remark that there "remains no stain on the gentleman's character," not to say that in some quarter there was *trop de zèle*.

There are amongst the friends of the family individuals who have very fine names, but they are not exactly the kind of people after whom the Thompsons, *père et mère*, wish to name their boy. The parents do not like them in their hearts; and, besides, there is not much probability of their benefiting the boy hereafter. They are not without means—on the contrary, they are thought to be rich; but they are not likely ever to transfer any of these riches to their child, and their naming him after them would make it appear as if they expected some such transfer, and, of course, “they never thought of such a thing.”

There are some persons whose names the boy ought to take, but they (the names) are so vulgar. John, Thomas! James is not so bad, but then Jeames and Jim are derived from it. There is a way of taking a family name as a Christian name, like Wellesley Smith, for instance; but if that family name happens to be Brown? Brown Thompson! This is rather a dilemma. One thing is certain, the boy must be called by some name; and another thing is certain, viz., that that name was written in the book of fate before he was born. Before his birth there were certain circumstances which commanded other circumstances, and they again, in their turn, brought about the circumstances which determined his parents to call him Thomas.

Thomas Brown was a brother of Mrs. Thompson's, the mother of our hero, about forty-five years of age, unmarried, of considerable—rather overrated than

underrated—wealth, of commensurate influence, and of good second-class commercial and corresponding social standing. He was eminently respectable: at one time of his life he used to go to church very regularly; this was when there existed, to a certain degree, a traceable connection between the clergyman, the congregation, his commercial friends, and himself; of late, however, he shut himself up for devotional purposes. He subscribed for various benevolent objects, especially in the great emergencies which periodically arise and when the subscription lists are published in the newspapers. In such cases his cheques were certainly not for smaller sums than those of first-class houses in his line.

This is an imperfect sketch of uncle Thomas; but, as we shall have to recur to him again and again, we shall have ample opportunities of completing the description.

It was decreed that one of the names of the boy should be Thomas; but it would appear that fate had not altogether its sway without a check or a slight turn from free will.

The boy's father, who had, in proportion to his dependent position in pecuniary matters, an independent mind—certain philosophers say that we must always make up from within what we lack without, and *vice versa*,—did not like altogether the idea of calling his son after his wife's rich brother without any modification whatever; so he had him christened Thomas Tudor. Mrs. Thompson intended him to be

always called Thomas, in honour of his rich uncle ; but somehow a nursery-maid, who had a liking for aristocratic names, abbreviated his second name Tudor into Dory.

Was there ever a child which, in its first successful attempts to speak, did not show unmistakable signs of more than ordinary commonplace intellect—in-
tellect increasing wonderfully as the child grows older and acquires the facility of expressing its thoughts ? So it was with Dory. His cleverness bordered on genius, that promised to influence his generation : such was the verdict of the small circle before whom he displayed his abilities. It may be that, at fifteen or sixteen, his parents became so accustomed to his intellectual superiority that their previous impressions concerning it were blunted, or that he really did not advance intellectually, as time went on, in the measure they at first felt justified in anticipating.

We pass over his school days. He was destined by his parents to become a merchant, and Mrs. Thompson had not the least doubt that her brother would provide for him.

CHAPTER II.

IN the city of London, in a lane turning off from a principal thoroughfare, there is an archway under which you pass to enter a court, the habitual dead silence of which is modified or pleasingly interrupted by the splash of a fountain standing in the middle of it. The impression which this sound makes upon your feelings differs in the same measure from the general impression caused by the aspect of the buildings that surround the fountain, as the many thoughts of the young gentlemen, diurnally confined within them, differ from their dreary occupation of writing in a legible hand, over and over again, "their heirs, executors, administrators, and assigns, as aforesaid." Perhaps we ought to have written, "their heirs, executors, administrators, *or* assigns," instead of "and." We trust this will not lead to any legal consequences.

On one side of the court a shining brass plate attracted attention: "Messrs. Deed, Lease, & Deed, Solicitors." These gentlemen were not all active in

the business, although the brass plate indicated that the three names still existed in the firm.

Mr. William Deed was not only the principal man, but the only one that was ever visible to those who had a right, from the nature of their business, to be admitted to the presence of the head of the firm. Mr. William, as he was called when his brother Frederick was still alive and a partner, was the leading spirit in the business at all times, even before Mr. Lease had retired from it and taken to model farming.

Did you ever know any house of business where there were two or more partners, that one of them did not take the place of "dictator"? This seems to be a necessity for the proper management of affairs.

This firm of solicitors was an eminent one—we ought rather to say was an eminently respectable one.

Perhaps we labour under a wrong impression, but it seems to us that the adjective "respectable" is oftener used in connection with the word solicitor than when speaking of any other professional men. Does this arise from any lurking doubt in the public mind of their general respectability?

One November forenoon, if you had stood near that soothing fountain, the fog would have just allowed you to discern the outline of an elderly man of gentlemanly appearance, who, umbrella in hand as usual, passed through the archway into the court, and, looking round for a moment, as if he did not quite recollect

to which door that shining brass plate was affixed, directed his course towards it. He went into the building, pushed open a green baize-covered door, that was studded with brass nails, and swung noiselessly on its hinges. He addressed the first person that met his eye, inquiringly, "Is Mr. Deed in?"

"Yes, sir; he is engaged at present."

"Will he be long?"

"What name shall I say?"

"Mr. Brown—Mr. Thomas Brown."

The young gentleman vanished through another doorway. He had a pleasing, expressive countenance, and a thin figure, as if his dinner consisted in his luncheon. We would have added "poor fellow," if it had not come to our knowledge that he had means for a few other things not quite so necessary as a dinner. He parted his well-oiled hair in the middle with geometrical precision, and wore an office coat nearly out at elbows.

Mr. Brown, who had been requested by the young man to take a seat while he went upstairs, perceived that he had left his desk half open; or rather, the lid was raised by means of a short ruler placed upright against the catch of the lock.

Mr. Brown was not a curious man, but by merely turning his head he could see, lying open within the desk, the "Mysteries of Paris," by Eugene Sue. From this Mr. Brown concluded that this young gentleman's weary repetition of "his heirs, executors, etc., etc.," was varied by something more pleasing

than the splash of the fountain outside. Mr. Brown shook his head. He made some reflections in his own mind touching the younger generation ; but, after all, this young man's doings did not concern him.

He could not compare his own apprenticeship with anything appertaining to the duties of a lawyer's clerk. What he had had to handle or prepare was not a thing that would or could wait till the next day, or the next, and yet be sufficiently paid for like a legal document.

He had been apprenticed to one of those old-fashioned grocers, who, with an unpretending appearance of retail business only, did a large wholesale trade, and gave the apprentices no time for taking any leisure over their writing.

The furniture of this first approach to the solicitor's sanctum was shabby, but it served only as a sort of out-post. Even the next compartment adjoining it was poorly furnished ; but then came another baize door, through which Mr. Brown was led, and then the elegance commenced.

He was requested to take a chair in that room. "Mr. Deed would be disengaged in a few minutes." A heavy Brussels carpet, of subdued pattern, was under his feet ; the rest of the furniture corresponded in substantiality and value ; a cheerful fire was burning in the grate (this was before strikes among colliers became the fashion). But the objects in the room with which the visitor was the most struck were the deed-boxes : they were not arranged according to any

system. How could they be? They were not all of one size—different persons had chosen them.

The shelves were full, so they were placed anywhere and everywhere: on the side table, on the top of the book-case, and on the projecting part of it before the glass doors—which told a tale as to the comfortable snooze the respectably bound volumes of law books inside were taking—on the table, on some of the chairs, on the floor, everywhere and anywhere, but not anyhow, for they were always and all the proper side up.

What a number of esquires there were! Some had the full names, others only initials.

What tales of sorrow and suffering, and even crime, are not contained in such boxes! That one on the highest shelf contained deeds concerning property, the owner of which had worked himself into a lunatic asylum in acquiring it; in another is a will, the testator of which lived too long—one of the devisees not being able to realize his reversion, could not wait any longer, and shot himself.

The most thrilling sensation-novelists never depict the heart-burnings, the mental tortures, the disappointments, the hope deferred that maketh the heart sick, the clues to which repose quietly in such boxes.

“Mr. Deed is disengaged now, sir; this way, if you please.”

Mr. Thomas Brown was not a man to be received by the lawyer sitting. From crowned heads downwards to the very humblest subject, there is a certain etiquette observed. This etiquette controls

the outward ceremonies, and affects the movements of the body and the expression of the eye in particular.

If Mr. Brown had been a step or two higher above what he really was in the social scale, or if he had had such a reputation for great wealth as to place him in the category, that birth and refined manners were a secondary consideration, Mr. Deed would probably not have given him the opportunity of looking at the furniture and boxes in the outer office in other than a most furtive manner.

Mr. Deed had risen from his revolving office chair, and met Mr. Brown at the entrance of his sanctum-sanctorum. Having shaken hands with him and remarked that it was a foggy day, to which Mr. Brown replied, laconically, "Very!" while he was taking off his muffler, they both sat down. Mr. Deed resumed his office chair, and Mr. Brown sat opposite to him. The solicitor was a florid-looking man, rather stout, of middle height, with light brown hair strongly tinged with gray, bushy whiskers, but no moustache; his eyes were light blue and small—they had an expression indicative of his ability to discern the hidden motive which formed the basis of the thoughts expressed by his clients.

No artist would have loved to paint those eyes in a fancy portrait. Yet they seemed to be honest, and were excellent business eyes.

"Well, Mr. Brown, now I am at your service. What can I do for you? I have not had the pleasure

of seeing you for a long time—not since we executed that will, deed, I mean, for you.”

“No, I had no occasion to call in the way of business. I go nowhere in the city except on business. I take my luncheon in the office; you know the routine of us city men, ‘bus and office, office and ‘bus.’”

“Quite so, quite so,” said Mr Deed, very rapidly.

“The last time I saw you I hinted to you my intention to make my will. Will you take instructions for the draft now?” With these words Mr. Brown handed a paper to the solicitor which he had taken out of his pocket-book.

Mr. Deed took it from him silently, and read its contents attentively. “Are the names of the persons mentioned in the will all correctly spelt, and are all their respective Christian names there, and are they all otherwise so designated that there can be no mistake about their identity?”

“Oh yes, I have been very particular—you know, Mr. Deed, I am a business man.”

After reading on for some minutes to himself, Mr. Deed put his finger on a clause and said, “This is a singular condition you make here with regard to one of your relations.”

“Which?”

“This.”

“Oh, not at all. I have fully made up my mind as to that.”

After a few more remarks and questions concerning

the nature of some investments, it was agreed that Mr. Brown should call again on the next Wednesday, when everything should be ready for him.

On that day he called accordingly, and signed his will in due legal manner, in the presence of witnesses.

CHAPTER III.

“*J’AIME les militaires !*” We know a beautiful garrison town—none of your dull places, out of which even the younger officers can extract no other advantage than wearing their old clothes out, which is perhaps a very questionable benefit to them, when we consider that their wine bill is very probably in proportion large as the place is quiet.

We all have a right to a certain amount of pleasure, or think we have, and unless we have a very hard taskmaster set over us, who keeps our brow in, it may be a gentle, yet constant perspiration for the sake of our daily bread, we will take our share of recreation out of this world in one shape or another.

The town we speak of is most picturesquely situated on the banks of a lovely river.

We love to hear the sound of the bugle—there is something very cheerful in it to our ears. What a boon a military band is to the inhabitants of a garrison town, but, above all, when it plays marching before the regiment ! The drums and fifes are hardly

less charming—there is something more martial about them than about the other instruments. Here they come! The sound of the band heralded their arrival. People stopped and waited for them, others ran up the by-streets to be in time to see them march by. A crowd of boys precedes the band, intermixed with a few grown-up persons of both sexes. Happy boys! How they march! What strides they take! It has always been a puzzle to us how they manage not to be overtaken by the drum-major, with his formidable staff of office. They are innocent of the state of their toilette: generally their boots might serve them for many years from their size, not from their condition, while their unmentionables are apparently as many years behind as their boots are in advance of their requirements; their caps they wear very independently—if they originally had peaks they are either altogether torn off or on the verge of a final separation from the main body. The principal characteristic, however, which marks these joyous urchins is mud. Mud must be very wholesome. Look at the rosy, healthy hue peeping through the crevices of that layer on this boy's cheek.

Schiller says that "for them (the boys) the dark and bright lots of life repose yet in the lap of time."

Who knows what great man may yet come out of that crowd of gleeful urchins? And having become a great man, will he forget his antecedents and surroundings, and ignore that period of his life when, a little tatterdemalion, the acme of human felicity

seemed to him realized in being permitted to march through mud or dust with the soldiers to the sound of fife and drum ?

If a proof were required that the fair sex can love disinterestedly, irrespective of money considerations, could there be anything more eloquently conclusive than the lively interest they take in these martial, manly looking sons of the soil, as they march by proud and erect, conscious that for the time they are the observed of all observers ? The cooks run up the basement steps, the housemaids open the front doors, the nursery-maids the upper windows—all are looking out smiling, some nodding ; the ladies at the windows look pleased, and we may safely guess that where the blinds are down, and ladies are in the room, they are peeping through them.

Some philosophers may advance that the interest displayed by the "weaker sex" (this is merely a quotation) is more in the spectacle—in the show produced by so many men marching together collectively.

If that is the case, why do they not bestow the same smile, the same encouraging looks on the band-of-hope or temperance men, when they pass by in procession with banners flying, beautifully decorated and rendered morally valuable by praises of water, but more by "threats" to brandy ?

They, also, have a band of music playing at their head. It is true these processions of civilians have but too often a big drum preceding them, dispropor-

tionately gigantic, when we measure the strength of the rest of the musical instruments; but this is not the reason why they are powerless to create for themselves the same interest in the female heart that the military do.

If women cared for money more than for love, these very temperance men would be their ideal. You may rely upon it, these men are or will be well-to-do (if they do not break out again), and can afford to spend more money on their charmers in a day than some of these private soldiers can in a month.

Gallantly the military march into their barracks, and in a very short time you see them disperse in the hurried, irregular way, which forms such a contrast to the measured movements and regular compactness which characterizes them while together on duty. The officers retire to their respective quarters.

Frederick Danmer is a young aristocratic-looking man and a lieutenant in that regiment. He has a fine countenance, with a rather grave expression; thoughtful, dark eyes, which when he smiled lit up his face with a gleam like sunshine on a landscape. He is tall and well proportioned; altogether a handsome, rather haughty-looking young man. He has no rollicking propensities, as some of his brother officers indulge in, nor is he given to practical joking, as some of his juniors are; still he is a general favourite, and always ready to oblige a friend.

"Wilmot," said he to a brother officer, while they

were going to their quarters, "can you come to my room before you go out? I want you to go with me to look at a horse that Whitman is anxious to show me."

Wilmot nodded and said, "I will be there by three."

At ten minutes past three the two young men, now dressed in plain clothes, sauntered out of the barrack-yard.

"I wonder," said Danmer, "whether this horse-dealer will ask more than fifty guineas?"

"Is it a bay?"

"I don't know," replied Danmer; "I did not ask him any particulars; in fact, I told him I was not a buyer, for I am not sure whether I can manage to pay for it just now."

They walked on, stopping at the principal shop-windows, more from habit than curiosity. In passing a certain confectioner's shop, Wilmot said, "Let us have a biscuit and a glass of sherry." They went in, and a very charming young lady poured out the sherry, while they helped themselves to biscuits.

After they had got satisfactorily over this little routine flirtation, they wended their way to the Imperial Hotel, and had a game of billiards and a glass of brandy-and-soda. Whitman's was the next place.

We have often wondered what treatment a groom, ostler, or stableman would receive at the hands of his chums, if, off duty, he ventured, for a change, on trousers of the Jack Tar cut. We

think if any one of them were eccentric enough to do so, the horse fraternity would give him to understand that it would be desirable for him to send in his resignation forthwith.

In Whitman's yard, a stableboy, with very tight trousers, which set off his "magnum" boots strikingly, was washing down a horse's legs when the two gentlemen entered. He raised himself, turned towards them, and, touching his cap with the quick gesture peculiar to his class, and an expression in his eye that might be interpreted to mean that he was their humble servant, and that a sixpence for a glass of ale would by no means be refused by him, waited to be addressed.

"Is Mr. Whitman in?" said Danmer.

"Yes, sir. Just went into the office, sir. Shall I call him, sir?"

"We will go to the office."

"Thank you, sir" (touching his cap again).

They walked into the office, which formed a peculiar contrast to the neatness of the stables.

Some time ago we read some statistics relating to the ignorance of the multitude in large towns concerning natural history. These statistics stated that out of a certain number of persons a very large proportion had never seen a lark, or heard the cuckoo, or contemplated a rainbow. Astounding as this must appear to many, what is it to the fact that thousands see horses daily, and do not know what constitutes a good horse? and yet not a few individuals are ex-

ceedingly susceptible as to their ignorance on that point.

We do not wonder at the reluctance, which is general, to own to ignorance concerning horseflesh, for every one keeps a horse.

The horse which everybody keeps is of a peculiar species—it is commonly known by the name of “hobby-horse.” As regards the species generally, it is the most many-sided animal under the sun. It thrives in all climates, in all lands where human beings live. It can boast of an immense variety of stables. It is stalled everywhere: in the drawing-room, in the study, in the hall, in the kitchen, in the very nursery, in the conservatory, in the garden. It is even stabled in the Houses of Parliament, and that is the only place where you meet with the species in some measure collectively. We beg pardon—we are wrong. There are certain societies where it is also to be met in troops, but not wild, tame—very tame.

The hobby-horse runs wild, too, yet never without an owner. It can be most vicious, most destructive; it has thrown many a rider, and even killed him. But now comes the greatest curiosity in natural history, we believe: the moment it has thrown its rider, life with it is extinct; but the effects of its gambols are sometimes lasting and lamentable.

It varies very much in size—in fact, more so than any known animal; much more than the dog. Some hobby-horses are not larger than a small puppy—many keep within the Shetland pony size; but that

of the donkey is perhaps the most general, if not the most harmless. Then there is the cob kind, which is more distinguished for good-nature than for brilliant exploits.

Those which are really dangerous are the hunter and racer sizes. The hobby-hunters and hobby-racers are very clever animals : they are not only used on most diversified ground, but also for a great variety of game.

Some mount their hobby-hunters, and away they start over stock and stone, after china, or *bric-à-brac*, or old medals, or pictures, or postage stamps.

The owner of the hobby-racer differs from the one of the hunter in this particular : he does not care for the hunt, nor does he ride after any object for its own sake ; he simply wishes to out-race his neighbours or his betters, as the case may be.

Some "landed proprietors" graze their hobby-horses on land added by mortgaging—that kind of soil grows a bitter weed called interest, which kills the animal very soon.

Mr. Whitman took off his hat to the two young men, and Danmer said—

"What about the horse you wanted to show me ?"

"He is in the stable, sir ; would you like to look at him ?"

"I am not a buyer just now, as I told you the other day ; but we happened to pass by."

"Well, gentlemen," interrupted Mr. Whitman, "there is no harm in looking at him, is there ? Just walk this way, if you please."

They walked together to the stables, which, we need hardly repeat, were kept with perfect neatness, and the borders of the straw under the horses' feet were plaited with as much care as if Jim the stableman had been previously apprenticed at a fashionable hairdresser's in Regent Street or Bond Street. The horses had all splendid coats; the legs of some had clean flannel bandages round them, and Jim himself had a bucket standing before him, and was earnestly and energetically engaged in rubbing a bit between his hands. When the gentlemen entered the stables he touched his cap again with his finger.

Mr. Whitman walked leisurely through the stables, for the purpose of giving the young men an opportunity of looking at his stock.

"This is a fine horse," said Wilmot, pointing to a magnificent bay in one of the stalls. "This is not the horse you mean, is it?"

"Oh no, sir. This bay is sold to Lord Summerton. That's the one," said Mr. Whitman.

"Is he quiet?" inquired Danmer.

"Quiet as a lamb," replied Mr. Whitman.

On which information Danmer walked up to the horse's head, speaking to it—

"Oh, my pet! Oh!"

He patted its neck, tried to look into its mouth, and passed his hand down the near fore leg and the near hind leg.

"As sound as a bell," said Mr. Whitman. "Jim!"

"Yes, sir."

"Take him out in the yard."

"Yes, sir," said that functionary.

Jim took off the rug, and led the horse out of the stable with the halter. In the yard, Jim placed the horse in the most favourable position, that is, with its fore legs on higher ground than its hind legs.

The horse was a chestnut, with a fine full eye; it had three white legs, a lovely little head, and, according to Mr. Whitman's statement, its age was five.

When Jim thought the gentlemen had had sufficient time allowed them for taking a general survey of the horse, he looked at his master, who nodded to him; and then Jim walked it up and down the yard, and made it trot—in short, showed its paces.

"That will do, Jim," said Mr. Whitman, and the horse was led back into the stable again.

"Well, gentlemen, what do you think of him?" inquired Mr. Whitman.

"He is a fine horse," said Danmer; "but I am afraid he is a little too light for me."

"Bless you, sir," said Mr. Whitman, "he'll carry two of you. Look at the blood. Why, he would carry me all day, and not turn a hair, and I believe I am over fourteen stone."

Whatever Mr. Whitman might have been in former years, the professional light-weight figure had, with him, degenerated into bulkiness. He took no horse exercise, walked as little as possible, appreciated a glass of good ale, and had a touch of the gout.

"Well, what do you want for him?" asked Danmer.

Mr. Whitman turned his head on one side, and quickly glanced at both young men, and said—

“ Seventy guineas ! ”

“ I can't afford to give seventy guineas for a horse,” said Danmer.

“ Well, sir, there's no harm done ; perhaps I may be able to find you a cheaper one in the course of a week or a fortnight.”

“ Oh no,” said Danmer ; “ don't you look out for one for me ; but if you happen to have anything that you think will suit me, I will come and look at it. I told you I was not a buyer. I will think it over, though, and will call again.”

“ There is a gentleman after him now,” said Mr. Whitman.

“ I hope, for your sake, that he will buy him,” said Danmer, coolly. “ We must be off now, Wilmot. Good morning.”

Mr. Whitman obsequiously took off his hat again, and the two brother officers walked out of the yard.

“ That's a fine chestnut, Wilmot ; don't you think so ? ”

“ I like it very much,” said Wilmot.

“ I wonder whether the fellow would take a bill ? ” observed Danmer.

“ Upon my word I don't know ; I believe Marsh didn't pay the whole purchase-money down for his grey,” replied Wilmot.

“ We must be quick,” said Danmer, “ or we will be late for mess.”

CHAPTER IV.

BEFORE Tudor left school his parents were much concerned about his immediate future. Mrs. Thompson had always looked up to her brother Thomas, "Uncle Thomas," as she always called him, with admiration and veneration. She often spoke of him as her "generous brother." If she had been asked in what his generosity consisted, she would have been at a loss to prove it satisfactorily. Her husband did not contradict her on that point nor on many others.

Although married life is, no doubt, as a rule, more calculated to tend towards modification of character than the state of single blessedness, yet there is a limit set to human powers—they will go so far and no further. When we were children, we thought that a piece of lead let down into the sea would sink to the bottom, even if it were a thousand fathoms deep; we are now told that even lead does not sink beyond a certain depth. Thus many opinions held respectively by husband and wife receive only an alteration to a certain degree through conjugal life, and then they

remain stationary, floating like the piece of lead in the sea. Nothing could alter Mrs. Thompson's settled opinion of her brother Thomas.

The estimation in which persons are held differs generally very much according to the extent of the sphere in which they move. Very seldom does a man's reputation run from his household to the larger family circle, and thence into society or public opinion altogether in one direction, either for good or for evil. A fool at home may be very much honoured publicly. The whole household, from the cook upwards, may look upon him as if he were not quite right in his head, while the "Imperial Scientific Society" does not get tired of conferring compliment upon compliment, and honour upon honour upon him. On the other hand, a man's immediate family circle may look upon his genius and accomplishments as upon something prodigious; they may think that there ought at least to be one-third of the letters of the alphabet attached to his name, like F.R.S.A.B.C.D., while the utmost the world is inclined to do for him is to grant him the distinction of A.S.S. From a moral standpoint it is the same.

Persons judged by their family as worthless often command the esteem of the community they live in, and others whose "good-nature" has almost become proverbial within the family circle, are adjudged by the public as hard-hearted, corrupt men.

The world judged Mr. Thomas Brown as a narrow-minded, severe man; the family took Mrs. Thompson's

verdict, and looked upon uncle Thomas as the man from whom they derived their prestige. At first Mrs. Thompson thought, and consequently it was an understood thing, that Tudor, after leaving school, would be taken by his uncle into his own office.

When that time, however, arrived, uncle Thomas showed no disposition to do so. He had, perhaps, very good reasons for advocating that Tudor should begin his commercial career with strangers. Although he had come very little into contact with his nephew during his boyhood, he thought it—very likely on principle—the best thing for Tudor that he should make his *début* in life as if he had no rich uncle to look to or depend upon.

There may be much kindness amongst relations—there may be more than is commonly supposed ; if so, it must lie so deeply hidden that it seldom comes to the surface. Where love ceases and duty commences, the relative positions between persons connected by ties of blood are exceedingly precarious. Parents in their relation towards their children have a stronger motive than that of duty ; their love prompts them to provide for their offspring. Uncles and aunts are naturally destitute of the same degree of affection for their nephews and nieces, and when required to assist them as a duty, very often find reasons why it is their duty not to do so. Hence the eye of such kindred is often like that of the eagle for descrying, even afar off, the follies, faults, and vices of relations depending upon them for help.

From the moment that uncle Thomas realized the responsibility or the duty that was made to devolve upon him with regard to his nephew, he became very observant as to his conduct. There were already a few indications in Tudor's character which did not please him. He wrote also a very unsteady hand.

Whenever we want to do a thing we find a hundred reasons why we ought to it, and *vice versa*.

Suppose we take a fancy to a particular house, as being a suitable place of residence for us, we enumerate, in the most plausible manner and with great fluency, all the advantages the house possesses. If, after a certain lapse of time, we want to leave that very house, we bring forward, with equal facility, a corresponding number of reasons why we should leave it.

If uncle Thomas had wanted to take his nephew into his own office, he might have said—"It is well that somebody like me, who takes a real interest in this boy, should by daily intercourse direct his good impulses into proper channels;" instead of reasoning that contact with strangers would do him more good.

He had a very influential friend in the city, the partner of the large private banking firm of Messrs. Snyder, Tyler, Tyler, Snyder, & Co. Mr. Edward Snyder was the senior partner, a friend of Mr. Brown's of many years' standing, and the latter had not much difficulty in obtaining for Tudor a junior clerkship in his friend's firm. Messrs. Snyder, Tyler, Tyler, Snyder, & Co. employed more than a hundred clerks.

If Tudor had been allowed to follow his own inclina-

tion he would have chosen the army as a profession—he fancied he should love the avocation of a soldier; his disposition led him to prefer that life to that of a merchant. He liked the uniform, and the dash and the romance (?) attached to military life. He seemed, also, to associate in his mind a sense of freedom and a variety with the life of an officer that the desk was not likely to afford him.

Mrs. Thompson, according to her lights, acted with perfect sincerity and with great affection when she determined that Tudor should become a merchant. Was uncle Thomas not his godfather, and was Tudor not christened Thomas?

We are not aware whether there exists any duty in life more nominal than that of a godfather. Uncle Thomas was a narrow-minded man, whose moral standard was the respectability of the coveted commercial circle, to attain a position in which had been the Alpha and Omega of his desires ever since his apprenticeship.

He had been successful in his worldly career, and exacted, within his dominions, from others the very same qualities which he was convinced had guided him safely so far towards the goal of his ambitions.

Heine, the great German poet, says—

“O, dass ich grosse Laster säh’,
Verbrechen, blutig, colossal,
Nur diese satte Tugend nicht,
Und zahlungsfähige Moral.”

Which, rendered into ordinary English prose, means :

"I would rather see great vices, crimes, bloody and colossal, than this satiated virtue and solvent morality."

The world is made up of countless different characters, with a corresponding variety of temperaments, gifts, aims, and so forth ; yet it takes a man superior to uncle Thomas to detect a prophet in his own family, or the good qualities of his nephew, in spite of the disparity which existed between them. Men of uncle Thomas's calibre, who look upon themselves as the makers of their own fortunes, have an unconquerable tendency to reproach or judge harshly those who are not so successful as themselves nor so active.

They might, with an equal show of reason, exact of the captain of a ship, that he should keep his crew continually at the same degree of activity and the same kind of work, irrespective of a storm, ordinary weather, or a dead calm. The oak might say to the pine—"Look at me, the way *I* have extended my branches!" and the pine might return the compliment. Tudor had done nothing to incur his uncle's displeasure, nor did the latter express any, nor could he (except in the matter of the handwriting); but there was an under-current of antipathy, arising from causes to which we have alluded.

Mr. Edward Snyder saw very little of Tudor—the other partners less. In spite of the friendship so long standing between Mr. Thomas Brown and Mr. Edward Snyder, their social circles were totally distinct. This

may have been attributable simply to personal choice. Still, Mr. Brown moved not in that sphere from which bankers of the standing of Messrs. Snyder, Tyler, Tyler, Snyder, & Co. would select their social acquaintances, which would comprise more distinguished personages altogether—persons of a different vocation from Mr. Brown's, or, if of the same vocation, of such unique magnitude that the vocation could be overlooked; persons of birth, rank, and acknowledged genius; persons of a pursuit which stamped the man a gentleman.

To a circle composed of such elements, Mr. Brown's prestige could not effect an entrance for his nephew. From a commercial view it was a mistake to place Tudor in so large a house, and that house a banking firm too. For a year or two his occupation was most one-sided, and when a change in his routine work took place it was rather for the worse.

Both in a social and a business point, Tudor had not the advantages of solicitude on the part of those from whom he naturally ought to have expected it.

In the office he went the even tenor of his way—neither satisfaction nor dissatisfaction was expressed with regard to him by his principals. Although Messrs. Snyder gave him no social facilities, he was not destitute of society. Circumstances offered him many opportunities to see social life in various phases. There was considerable force in his character, in consequence of which, having no fixed high moral standard, he ran the danger of throwing himself with

all his might upon one or other particular amusement. It is not only "All work and no play that makes Jack a dull boy," but to many work is only rendered tolerable by the ever-present thought of some pleasure to be enjoyed by-and-by.

CHAPTER V.

ENTER our heroine. We tremble not a little mentally at the introduction of Emily Danmer.

It is said that no man ever did anything worthy of notice that a woman or a priest was not the moving cause; which we will render into other words by saying that the strongest principles that inspire men's actions for good or evil are love and faith.

In her small circle Emily Danmer showed a most affectionate disposition, which augured well for the means she would employ for influencing her future husband, if it is written in the stars that she should get married. There was nothing in her character which could possibly lead to the conjecture that she would ever covet any position beyond the legitimate sphere of a loving wife, desirous of helping her companion in life by such advice and assistance as she might sincerely conceive to be conducive to his happiness. Nor was it at all probable that she would ever try, in an unseemly way, to have her own will.

Emily had one of those sweet feminine natures that would ever be her truest friend, and which would

prompt her to act, not from policy, but from a loving disposition, which, if it does not necessarily insure success in worldly matters—whose stability is for all of us but fleeting,—was calculated to impart much peace and happiness to those she lived with, and she was never so pleased as when ministering in some way to the comfort of those connected with her.

From her large deep blue eyes emanated a steady light, a concentration of intellect and love tempered by that mental and moral repose which ordinary trials and vicissitudes cannot disturb, though they were eyes that were susceptible at times of a look of appealing sadness, which acted powerfully and irresistibly on the minds of others. Nature had gifted her with a slight, elegant figure, rather above the middle height, and her motions were easy and graceful. Her complexion was fair, and her beautiful, abundant, light brown hair, combined with her other charms, threatened to do much to entangle the hearts of men.

Emily was an only daughter, but not an only child, for Frederick Danmer is her brother, and about four years older than herself. Major Danmer, their father, had retired from the army, and lived in a pleasant house at Kensington. He was a tall, military-looking man, well proportioned, and rather stately in manner; his fine hazel eyes expressed firmness and benevolence. He was the type of an honourable soldier. He had seen much service, endured many hardships, and witnessed many heart-rending scenes.

Irrespective of any outward circumstances, he was a gentleman—if fortune had bereft him of income and rank, his social claims would still have been the same. Worldly vicissitudes may cut off a gentleman from the opportunities which bring him into contact with his equals, as was the case with many of the former French *émigrés*, but they can never take one iota from his moral claim to social consideration.

From the nature of his independent position, which, neither officially nor for other worldly considerations, made it incumbent upon him to live in a circle to a great extent antagonistic to his personal standard or his predilections, his social acquaintances were just as unexceptionable as himself, and not distinguished by money alone, but by birth, rank, or office.

Mrs. Danmer's card-basket could not boast of such a collection of distinguished names as that of Mrs. Edward Snyder's, but it contained a few names which Mrs. Snyder coveted in vain.

Between Major Danmer and his wife there was never any essential divergence of opinion, and father and mother and daughter had all the elements in them to form the most pleasing, the serenest household imaginable. Even the servants felt as members of the family.

Persons of the major's character, disposition, and position—which latter secured him, independently of private means, a fixed income, which neither fluctuations of the market, commercial crises, nor failing speculation can touch—have it in their power to give

the persons of their household a great stability. The attendant upon the major was an old soldier, who had fought in the same campaigns with him, and who, if the major had told him that his services were no longer required, would have respectfully declined to accept his dismissal.

Emily was sitting in her favourite room, with her classical head bent over some needlework, when the maid brought her a letter.

Emily knew the handwriting well. It was her brother Frederick's. An expression of anxiety, as quickly gone as come, flashed over her countenance. It is, perhaps, harsh to assert that we all are connected with some one who is the evil genius of our life, either for leading us into sin or for placing us in such painful alternatives that it is the greatest trial to be serene. The disturbing element in the Danmer family was Frederick. Had it not been for him, its course of happiness would, perhaps, have flown on evenly and uninterruptedly, with nothing to disturb it but the sad separations which the unavoidable tribute we all have to pay to nature imposes upon us.

Emily had written her brother hundreds of letters, all for the purpose of conveying something pleasant to him, exclusively to him; all with the aim of contributing to his happiness as much as in her power lay. He took all the endless little attentions, the many proofs of tenderness and sisterly love, with indifference—as matters of course.

When Emily's letters contained money—money that

ought to have gone for her personal requirements, his gratitude lighted up ephemerally, as gnats start into existence in winter-time. When *he* wrote to his sister he always wanted something for himself, and seldom did his requests turn upon other than hard alternatives.

Emily, after having read her brother's letter, wiped a tear from her cheek, and, hearing footsteps outside, quickly put the letter in the pocket of her dress.

CHAPTER VI.

IN a quiet street in the West End, not far from Piccadilly, there lived a gentleman of the name of Mr. Harris Harris. To the uninitiated, the row of houses, of which he occupied one, was rather unpretending in appearance. Is there anything more deceptive than the outside of West End town residences and mansions? Persons acquainted with the locality knew that it represented a fashionable neighbourhood, and would hardly have expected to see a dentist's brass plate in such very select company.

Mr. Harris Harris was a dentist. Shall we say that he was a man of science or an artist? If he had no science, it was not for want of ponderous books handsomely bound; if he was no artist, it was not for want of objects of art in his gorgeous abode. His house was furnished almost entirely with objects of art; and so crammed full were the hall, the landings, the ante-chamber, the drawing-rooms, the dining-room, the study, and the "chamber of torture," with statues, statuettes, vases, urns, and other objects

of art and curiosity, from the days of Pompei downwards ; with engravings, pictures, pianos, harmoniums, books—that a suspicion crept over you, that this collection of heterogeneous articles must be intended for other purposes than that of decoration.

What an imposing residence ! What strides we have made ! Formerly poor humanity suffered agony in barbers' shops of very humble appearance. But then, former generations lived comparatively toothless. We manage those things better now. Mr. Harris Harris combined with his artistic or scientific profession the generous vocation of a money-lender. None of those advertising, benevolent money-lenders, that are so considerate with poor widows' furniture, but a "genteel" money-lender. Mr. Harris was, he believed, entitled to be considered a gentleman—either as a medical man or as a rich artist. Some of the nobility and gentry, and a few foreign counts, called upon him, not to have their teeth drawn, but for other purposes. He was also connected with the turf, and a subscriber in proper quarters. He was a keen, intelligent man, Mr. Harris. He knew human nature, and there was no humility necessary in him.

Persons of high social standing, who called upon him, independently of the tooth business, were received with that *nonchalance* with which equals receive their equals. Was there not everything at his command that constitutes a gentleman, from plenty of antique furniture upwards ?

Mr. Harris Harris was a powerfully built man,

perhaps a trifle under the middle height, his thick black hair was cut very short, his nose was small and pointed, but slightly aquiline, and his dark brown eyes, although glassy, were piercing; they had a concentrated, sinister look. He was a severe man, who thought his course of action towards his fellow-creatures perfectly justifiable. Were most of the persons who had money dealings with him not people who promised and broke their promises? And, moreover, were their requirements not based upon their follies and vices: upon their pride, their vanity, their prodigality, their gambling propensities, their sensuality, and so forth? Did they not deserve the lash? They got it, too, whenever they came in contact with Mr. Harris Harris. Was there anything in him that was not most honourable? He paid all his bills most regularly. There was no promising on his part and not performing. He was even generous at times, although almsgiving was not much in his line. Of the sort of alms which are given by the right hand and ignored by the left, he had never heard; and as for ostentatiously giving cheques because so-and-so or such an one had subscribed, he scorned such weakness—he was too independent and too clever for that. His mission was to scourge human nature and to make—a profit by it.

What a mistake to suppose that Mr. Harris Harris was a despicable character! He was rather a moralist, and took toll where toll was due. He dispensed justice to an immoral world, and is the labourer not

worthy of his hire? He had just descended from his mail phaeton, entered his house and gone up to "torture chamber number two," that is, where the *loan* business was transacted; he had wrung the bell for a glass of sherry and a biscuit, and taken a seat at his writing-table. A servant came up and handed him a card on a tray.

"Mr. Danmer!" he said, half audibly. "Show him up."

Frederick Danmer was not a coward, but when he entered the money-lender's room he felt very much like one. This feeling arose, perhaps, from a consciousness on his part of the disparity of the contending forces.

The transaction between the money-lender and the borrower is almost like a battle between regular soldiers and irregular volunteers as to strength and trained skill. It is like entering into a game of cards with your adversary, and submitting to his dealing to himself all the court cards, leaving you only the deuces and fives and sixes. The borrower is like a poor dwarf-king, who, for the safety of his territory, thinks it incumbent upon him to make terms with his giant neighbour.

We find we have not been very happy as regards our similes, for Mr. Harris himself will say, "Why do they come to me? *I* do not threaten the dwarf-king's dominions; *I* do not force the card-game upon any one." Very true. "They come to me for a certain article they require; that article is my pro-

perty, and I tell them that I will part with it on certain terms only. If they do not like my terms, they can leave the article in my hands. And," continues Mr. Harris, "who can fix the value of anything or the profits of anybody?" Certainly Parliament fixes the fares of cabmen for the purpose of protecting the public, but that concerns only cabmen, and they can always take a little more work out of the patient horse to make up. "It may be worth a person's while to pay me sixty, eighty, or a hundred per cent., and the risks I run for want of proper security are so great that it does not remunerate me to advance money unless it be at such high rates," argues Mr. Harris.

We are utterly at a loss how to refute the money-lender's arguments. And yet how is it that we have a feeling of repugnance as regards Mr. Harris Harris's mode of making money?

Does this feeling defy definition? Must we dismiss the questions somewhat in the fashion of—

"The reason why I cannot tell;
But I don't like you, Doctor Fell"?

In vain do we search in natural history for some animal, quadruped or reptile, that would appropriately compare with the money-lender of Mr. Harris's stamp.

Mr. Harris is no spider that weaves the web for the unsuspecting fly, gambolling in the summer sun; he is no tarantula, no scorpion; he is no serpent that

fascinates the little birds till they tumble down helplessly, victims to his powers of attraction. No, Mr. Harris is worse than that. We do not look to the reptile world for moral qualities. How is it that from time immemorial—in comedies, in tragedies, in the *vox populi*, in short, the character of the money-lender is detested? Is it because the circumstances necessarily connected with the ultimate enforcements of his terms are revolting to human nature? Is this what impels society in general instinctively to shrink from Mr. Harris Harris with repugnance and undefined fear?

He received Frederick Danmer in his usual style, partly insolent, partly defying. Without rising from his chair, he curtly said—

“Take a seat, Mr. Danmer,” and, without waiting to be addressed, continued—“The last transaction of yours was very unsatisfactory. I thought I could rely upon your word as an officer and a gentleman.”

Frederick Danmer winced.

The money-lender knew very well that it was not in his customer's power to keep his word, but his sense of justice told him that Frederick Danmer had no right to promise what he could not perform. Stern logic! Mr. Harris might have been answered that he then acted as if his customer's word was not marketable, for he enacted the precautionary measure of two names, brother officers of Frederick's, on the back of a bill. Moreover, as the bill was finally paid, with all extra expenses that were incurred in conse-

quence of Frederick's not honouring it on the day it fell due, Mr. Harris might well have considered the transaction as closed, and remained silent on Frederick's delinquency.

But the money-lender understood his business too well to let any commercial advantage slip. Was it not his business to sell his article at the highest value? Have dealers in other merchandise not a right to lay out their goods in the proper light to the best possible advantage.

Of course Mr. Harris knew that he would be applied to for a loan. His money would naturally rise in value as his customer's character was unreliable. Although a man's good character, in many transactions of the kind, goes for nothing, his bad character is worth something to the other party. According to the fable, the reproaches of the wolf, about troubling the limpid waters of the stream, met with no effectual denial on the part of the sheep; nor did Frederick Danmer judge it prudent to irritate the stern money-lender by anything like logic.

"Mr. Harris," he said, "I did my utmost to pay that bill, and I had the most reasonable expectations of being able to meet it at maturity."

"Yes, and you did not, and just on a day when I had myself very heavy bills to meet—it put me to great inconvenience."

"I am sorry for it. I have come to a—to ask you for another loan."

Frederick stopped a moment. Mr. Harris said

nothing, but looked at him with a mingled expression of mild astonishment and natural curiosity, as much as to say, "Well, I must confess!" and "I wonder what security you can offer me!"

"This time," said Frederick, "nothing less than a hundred and twenty pounds will be sufficient for me."

"A hundred and twenty pounds!" calmly ejaculated Mr. Harris; "and for how long do you want it?"

"Well, I should like to have it for nine months."

"On personal security?"

"Yes," said Frederick Danmer.

"Is it the same gentlemen that backed your last bill who will go security for you this time?"

"No," said Danmer. "I cannot ask them any more; they have done quite enough for me. To tell you the truth, I have the greatest reluctance to ask any of my friends to give their names. I have some valuables" (here Frederick put his hand into his pocket and took out a small casket) "and a chronometer which an aunt of mine gave me—I believe it cost over sixty pounds. I thought of depositing them with you as security—the jewels alone are worth at least eighty pounds—and of offering you a higher rate of interest with my note of hand."

Mr. Harris calmly, almost mechanically, held out his hand for the casket, which Frederick reached to him over the writing-table. He opened it and took out two diamond rings, a lady's brooch and bracelet, all of which he examined with an air of carelessness, as if they were hardly worth looking at.

"What do you think they are worth?" asked Frederick.

"Worth? Why, nothing at all to speak of."

With regard to his chronometer and the casket, although fully worth the money, and more, to those who could afford not to part with it, he might have gone further than Mr. Harris's, and yet found himself considerably disappointed as to the value "ready-money" purchasers would set upon it. The chronometer was by one of the very best makers, and the jewellery was exquisite; but if Frederick Danmer had not taken it to the money-lender's at all, it would have been cheaper for him, and otherwise have saved him some bitter pangs.

The money-lender was determined to have them in addition to very unexceptionable personal security.

"At all events," continued Mr. Harris, "I cannot think of entertaining any proposal from you with this security alone. I will take this security and one good name—I generally require two, as you know." Mr. Harris looked at his watch. "You will excuse me—I have an appointment; I shall be in to-morrow and the day after, between eleven and twelve. Good morning, Mr. Danmer!"

With these words, Mr. Harris, in his usual unceremonious manner, dismissed Frederick, who left the house with slow steps and preoccupied look, trying to bethink himself of a friend likely to get him out of his difficulty, while he felt by no means elated at the prospect of being compelled

to take a step, the consequences of which were either an humiliating or burdensome alternative : humiliating in case of a refusal, burdensome if his request should be granted by his friend.

CHAPTER VII.

TUDOR's father held a civil appointment under the Government in one of the most important provincial towns. Tudor's *début*, therefore, in the commercial world, at Messrs. Snyder & Co.'s, entailed necessarily a separation from his family, and a distinct establishment for him in London, if we may dignify his furnished apartments—sitting-room and bed-room—with that appellation.

In the beginning he spent most of his evenings at home; later, public amusements attracted him, and after the zest, which simply their newness to him conveyed, had subsided, he gradually increased the number of his social acquaintances, who to a great extent monopolised his leisure time.

He performed his duties at the bank most conscientiously and satisfactorily, from which his uncle might well have argued that he promised to become a clever, steady, business man and a useful member of society.

For a considerable time his income, which consisted partly of his salary and partly of an allowance

which his father made him, was perfectly adequate to his requirements. This was when he spent his evenings mostly at home. His rooms were very neatly, almost elegantly furnished. His was a studious mind, and, for his age, means, and position, he had quite a select little library, comprising in it German and French classical works: he loved those languages—the pleasing French language, with its innate tendency towards logical precision, and the rich, many-sided German, so well adapted for poetry, and so obliging in furnishing you with compound words for your “*Geist und Gemüth*,” independently of anything to be found in the dictionary.

We rather regret that Tudor played upon no musical instrument, for, irrespectively of the fact that the necessary practising would have been a desirable schooling to his impetuous temperament (we think he inherited it from his mother), it might, later in life, have procured him many a soothing hour if he could have had recourse to his flute or his piano—as Luther took up his harp in moments of anguish of soul or depression of mind,—not to speak of the social advantages persons with musical accomplishments have. They often get admission into society, and are made pets in it, for the sake of this accomplishment only. Tudor had for this night an invitation to a grand musical party.

Hugh Neilson was a fellow clerk of his in the bank, perhaps a year or two older than himself. His father was the head of a very large mercantile house in the

city, much larger than uncle Thomas's, although the latter was, perhaps, from a pecuniary point of view, the safer man, as he had more personal control over his property than Mr. John Neilson had over his.

It depends very much upon how our worldly interests are blended with those of others, whether, from the nature of our connection with others, they are subject to subtle yet powerful influences, which neither skill nor energy nor foresight can avert or set aside.

Mr. John Neilson "turned over" a much larger amount of money in a year than uncle Thomas; but he was married, and he had partners and they were married; while uncle Thomas was autocrat alone, commercially and domestically, and could control his expenses.

Mr. John Neilson's domestic establishment, his home, presented all the elegance, refinement, comfort, profuseness, and hospitality which only the house of a wealthy Englishman offers.

The ample space, the scrupulous cleanliness, the prevailing order, and noiseless regularity; the luxurious furniture, where you are invited to take ease and repose, in every apartment; the objects of art and prominent literary works, to meet your taste and mental predilections; the beautiful lawn, with the exquisitely fine grass, as it is only cultivated and found in England; the perfectly arranged out-offices; and last, but not least, the variety of flowers, produced at an annual expense that would form a comfortable

income for people of moderate desires—nothing was wanting in the house and grounds of Mr. John Neilson. They were situated in a pleasant suburb of London, and presented that most desirable combination of the soothing, dignified repose of the country with the accessibility to the stirring, distracting bustle of a great city.

The Neilson family was not large—it consisted only of four members: Mr. John Neilson and his wife and their children, Hugh and Emma. They were, however, never alone—either they had some relatives or some friends, or both, staying in the house on short visits to them. Their hospitality in that respect had become a matter of routine: we believe Mrs. Neilson had marked the almanack with red ink, for months in advance, with the names of the guests and visitors as they were to succeed each other.

The enjoyment of the style in which the Neilsons lived, and the liberty and hospitality they combined with it, was, however, marred, to the minds of some, by the superficiality of mind which characterized the family, and Mrs. Neilson's pedantic exaction that all should conform to her household ways.

Nothing was better calculated to illustrate both the power and the impotency of money than the *tout ensemble* of Mr. Neilson's establishment—the power of procuring, and hospitably dispensing, everything desirable that money can buy, and the impotency of attracting, with any degree of permanency by

such dispensation, minds superior to the host and hostess.

Neither Mr. Neilson nor his wife could converse on any question of public interest. Mr. Neilson's conversational good taste was limited to tabooing discussions about business; but he was never vividly interested in anything unless the conversation turned on objects belonging to himself: on his wine, his horses, his garden, his greenhouses, his building improvements, he could be very eloquent.

Mrs. Neilson was a conversational Will-o'-the-wisp—no steady, shining light that you could follow up, but an unsatisfactory thing, here and there and nowhere in less than a moment. Of amusements and fashionable and remarkable sights, and much-frequented watering-places in and out of England, all accessible through money, Mrs. Neilson could echo the general verdict.

Hardly a day passed when they were at home that they had not a dinner party, but as the *personnel* at their table was ever shifting, the component parts formed an uneasy whole.

Sometimes Hugh Neilson would invite to dinner a "Bohemian," who, without being in the least vulgar, would comment on the topics of the day with a vivacity rising a little above the usual temperature, and in terms overflowing the conventional vocabulary of "The Firs," which was the name of Mr. Neilson's residence. Such marked individuality would render the social atmosphere of the dining-room a little

more uncomfortable than usual; as, however, the ill-at-ease feeling in such a case became almost always mutual between host and guest, the same Bohemian rarely dined with them twice.

On the whole, the Neilsons were exceedingly hospitable and very harmless. Emma, the daughter, was musical—she played on the piano and sang.

Through a friend of hers, lately married, who lived with her husband in the neighbourhood of The Firs, she and her brother had become members of a musical society. It was arranged between the members that those who kept establishments, or, if unmarried, whose parents did, should in rotation, on the first Monday in the month, give a party to the members, who were perhaps altogether forty in number. There was no rule, as may be easily imagined, which excluded from the party such other friends as the family chose to invite in addition to the society.

It was for such an occasion that, one day, Hugh Neilson invited Tudor. "Thompson," he said, "I have an invitation from my mother for you for Monday next." With these words he handed Tudor Mrs. Neilson's note. "It's a musical party, Thompson; you musn't say No."

"I shall only be in the way, I am afraid; yet it is very kind of you to invite me, and I shall have great pleasure in going."

"All right; I will call and take you up. You will be a little earlier than the others, but never mind that."

According to arrangement, Tudor was dressed and quite ready when Hugh called for him.

The reception of their son's friend and fellow clerk in Messrs. Snyder's bank had as much cordiality in it as they were capable of bestowing. They say that poverty gives us strange companions ; the same holds good as regards music : persons of the most varied social standings are drawn together by music. People, that on account of their vocations, their habits, their likings, their views, would not find much mutual satisfaction in meeting socially, are brought into contact through music.

Ah, there is the first ring. This is only an elderly lady, a widow, an old friend of the family ; she lives close by and came in a bath-chair, while her niece was walking by her side. A few other neighbours come in, all friends, on a more friendly footing with the family than the majority of the company expected, who, truth to say, were not known to Mr. and Mrs. Neilson.

The first carriage and pair draws up. The footman jumps quickly off the box, rings the bell, opens the carriage door, and out steps Mr. Saltis, the well-known East India merchant, who hands out his wife, Mrs. Saltis, and his two daughters. There is more formality observable in the reception of these guests. There is nothing to be said about them, for they are not remarkable.

The intervals between the arrival of the guests are getting shorter, and many arrive at the same time.

It would be useless and tedious to give a detailed description of the company. There were the clergyman and his wife, the family doctor and his family, who were neighbours ; some gentlemen who held civil appointments under Government, with and without family ; one or two families whose heads were members of the legal profession. Prominent among the artists were (it was a vocal and instrumental society) the famous violin *dilettante*, Mr. Charles Carter, who paid seventy-five guineas for an old violin, which he fondly believed to be a Straduarus. He was a commission agent and a bachelor. Another member was Mr. Giovanni D. Phelps, the celebrated American tenor, whose diamond shirt studs, through their sparkling radiance, claimed as much the attention of the eye as his voice that of the ear. Mr. Egremont Carlton, a promising young actor, was also thought to be an acquisition by the society on account of his beautiful voice.

For the purpose of proper support in their performances the director had taken care to have among the members a few professional musicians, whose solo performances also heightened the interest of the programme.

The evening passed off very pleasantly. In so large an assembly, which included naturally so many ladies, the elements of grace and beauty were not wanting, to say nothing of the elegance and taste displayed by the disposal of the furniture and ornaments, and the various decorations in which "God's messengers," the flowers, played no secondary part.

The solos and the duets, the quartettes and the choruses were performed with that mediocrity which seems to be the characteristic feature of amateur musical societies, but as at the end of every particular piece unanimous applause followed, it would be invidious in us to find fault. The regular applause partook in enthusiasm of the moderate degree of the performance, except when a star, a professional luminary, made the piano shake to its very castors, exhibiting a thumping power that might have been the envy of the Benicia Boy, and a dexterity which would have astonished the Japanese jugglers.

We cannot abstain from observing that there were several young ladies, on the shady side of spring, whose voices appealed to your feelings of compassion. If they had asked your opinion, before they devoted themselves to singing, you could not honestly have hesitated for one moment to give Mr. Punch's advice,—"Don't!" and yet such advice might have been injudicious and unkind, considering that they had no other attractions for society. As it was, etiquette required that one should be very much obliged to them, as one generally is to amateur singers, for their share of contribution to the general enjoyment; indeed, matters might have been worse if it had been your fate to listen to them when they practised at home. The supper, however, surpassed the mediocrity of the music, as Mr. Neilson was in a position to statistically testify when he went with his butler over the status of his stock in the wine-cellar. There

was a remarkable quantity of champagne and sparkling moselle drank.

The performers were no doubt exhausted, and the largeness of the company had the agreeable effect of doing away with any conventional hesitation as regards the number of glasses to be taken.

Miss Emma Neilson, who was the moving spirit as regards this entertainment, had reason to be satisfied with the *éclat* with which the evening passed: her parents had discharged a social liability incurred with the members of the musical society, in a style befitting their position.

Whether Mr. John Neilson and his wife a day or two afterwards judged the benefits enjoyed or derived from the entertainment adequate to the expense and the trouble, is a question which we are not in a position to answer. However, all dispersed, at a late hour, in the best of spirits. Tudor was rather embarrassed as to a conveyance for getting home. His friend Hugh had told him that there was a cab-stand close to The Firs, but the company broke up at such a late hour that the servant who was sent for a cab had to report that not one was left on the stand.

As fortune (or fate) would have it, Mr. Egremont Carlton, the promising young actor, was just standing in the hall, being assisted by the footman (for an anticipated consideration) in putting on his overcoat, when Tudor's dilemma, as to getting home comfortably, became manifest.

"My dear sir," said Mr. Carlton, "will you come with me in my hansom? Where do you live?"

On Tudor telling him the name of the street in which his lodgings were situated, Mr. Carlton was delighted that it was on his very way home, and Tudor was certainly not less pleased at the dreary prospect of a forced walk of some seven or eight miles in the dead of night being removed in so satisfactory a manner.

We are quite ready to admit all to the excellences of the metropolis; and as the Viennese used to sing, and perhaps do still sing, of their Vienna—

"Es giebt nur a Kaiserstadt
Es giebt nur a Wien,"

so there is only one London. Still, the distances of that unique city of cities tell not only on the purse, but also on the physical condition of its inhabitants. The wear and tear consequent upon them is terrible to contemplate. Many exchange the business fatigues of the day for those of a grand evening party, and, that over, they have a journey before them for getting home, which, at the time when canal boats were regarded as a convenient and swift means for carrying passengers, would have been considered long enough for a touching parting scene between affectionate parents and their children.

It was a beautiful, starlight night, and the two young men, being in a state of animation, enjoyed their drive very much. A feeling of cordiality, or what they took for such that night, sprang up between them, and,

principally owing to the "*sans cérémonie* style," peculiar to Mr. Egremont Carlton, it was agreed upon that they should continue the acquaintance begun under such cheerful auspices.

We trust our readers will not for a moment think our allusion to "the cordiality as it appeared to them that night," meant anything more than the difference which exists between an establishment splendidly lighted up for purposes of recreation, and Messrs. Snyder's bank, for instance, at ten o'clock in the morning.

CHAPTER VIII.

WE remember having seen, years ago, a caricature representing a small detachment of Prussian soldiers marching to their barracks after drill, with their cloaks thrown over them in a terrific rainstorm. The corporal, or "Unter-Offizier," perceiving that they had unrolled their cloaks and put them on, cried out indignantly, "What is the use of the cloak, if it is not rolled?"—a caricature, illustrative of the warped notions into which people may fall through a pedantic love for accustomed order.

If our readers will accompany us into a certain street not far from the Strand, we will take them to furnished apartments, where the pedantic rolled-cloak spirit did not prevail. What is the evidence of genius if there is no disorder? To begin with the outward aspect of the house—in which the window curtains inside played no subordinate part,—and the entrance and the staircase, with its varnished paint and stair-carpeting of undecipherable pattern: it conveyed a

want of freshness, like that of a white waistcoat worn just one day too many.

Mr. Egremont Carlton's apartments were on the first floor, and consisted of a large sitting-room and a bed-room. The disorder which met your glance in every direction was rather too unstudied to be called artistic; the stamp of genius was evidently everywhere—of a mind whose superior ærial flight left, naturally, things terrestrial in that disarranged state into which they will get, unless some commonplace person rearranges them.

On the piano lay a pair of dress trousers, which, it appeared, required brushing; and on the floor, perpendicularly under them, was one boot—a patent leather boot with red top. The ordinary observer was impelled to look for the fellow of that boot, but gave it up, like a riddle in a weekly penny periodical, for the solution of which you have to peer into the next number. On the music-stool rested, rather precariously, a tray with a tumbler and a jug which had contained draught ale. In the middle of the room stood a large round table, with a cover of a faded crimson colour hanging rather threateningly on one side, suggestive of a fall to the objects lying pell-mell on it—and these were various and manifold. Among them were a number of books, one or two of which lay open; on one of them rested a meerschaum pipe, out of which some ashes had fallen on the leaves. On the other open book a pair of stage spurs were conspicuous, with rowels large enough to tickle an elephant into

his own hands, his superior judgment would astonish the world.

Mr. Carlton was seated in a comfortable arm-chair, in his *robe de chambre*, with a smoking-cap on his head. The jug and the pipe we described as on the music-stool and open book respectively, when we wished to convey a correct impression of the young actor's surroundings, had been refilled. He was puffing away, taking an occasional sip of ale, and reading the morning paper, when somebody knocked at the door.

"Come in!" after which Mr. Carlton rose from his chair and welcomed his visitor by shaking hands with him, and saying—

"How do you do, Fred? when did you come to town?"

"Oh," said Danmer, "the colonel is a very good fellow; I often get a short leave. Well, how have you been since I saw you last?"

"Pretty well, thank you," said Carlton, rising to ring the bell. "Bridget, get me some more ale! or, wait"—addressing himself to Danmer—"perhaps you prefer brandy-and-soda, or anything else? Nominate your poison. I have some very good brandy here."

"That will do nicely," replied Danmer. "I'll take some cold water with it, if you please," upon which Bridget left the room to fetch some.

"Have a cigar?"

"Thank you," said Danmer, selecting one of unblemished shape and outside leaf.

"You will find them very good, excellent flavour. I get them very cheap from a particular friend of mine, who imports them wholesale."

"I should like to have a box of those," said Danmer.

"How long do you stay?" inquired Carlton.

"I must leave by Friday."

"Oh, that's capital," cried Carlton. "I have arranged a little party for Thursday evening; you must come. The other night I made the acquaintance of a very nice fellow. You know Messrs. Snyder and Tyler's bank, don't you?"

"I have heard of them," replied Danmer.

"He is in their bank. In fact, I have another friend in that bank, now that I think of it. They are both capital fellows—families who are immensely rich."

Danmer had made Carlton's acquaintance at the town where he was garrisoned. The latter was then engaged with a company who made a tour in the provinces, and through the young officer's great liking for going behind the scenes, Mr. Carlton's obliging ways brought them into contact with each other. Other young officers, in conjunction with Danmer, gave a few supper parties to some of the ladies and gentlemen of the company, and the acquaintanceship sprang up between the officer and the actor, which, for some reason or other, was kept up by Danmer. Some characters have a liking for the company of those socially their inferiors. This may arise from a love of adulation or of familiarity which good

society would not tolerate, and censure ; or from some other more or less selfish motive.

Frederick Danmer, as far as birth, position, appearance, and manners were concerned, was a gentleman. The adulation which he received below the line of his acknowledged social sphere may have been perfectly sincere, although, to a man less selfish and less vain, excessive praise and flattery would have been displeasing. When Carlton spoke of his two rich friends in the bank, Danmer's attention became more engaged.

"Who are they ?" he asked.

"Why, one is a Mr. Thompson, and the other is called Hugh Neilson."

"Neilson and Thompson !" repeated Danmer, almost to himself ; "no great family names."

"Bless me, my dear fellow, we cannot all have aristocratic names ; the most influential in the land are nowadays called Smith and Brown and Thompson," he added, with a cheerful laugh. "Of course, I prefer my own name to any of those, and in my profession a common name is rather a drawback."

Danmer, without entering into the merits or demerits of names in Mr. Carlton's profession, continued—"What sort of a party are you going to have on Thursday night ?"

"Oh, quite a snug, select little affair, and if you do not meet somebody that you like it shall not be my fault."

Danmer looked slightly annoyed, but Carlton, being

perfectly unconscious of having touched a tender chord, did not perceive it.

"We have engaged a suitable room at the Philadelphia Hotel, and if you will bring your flute with you it would be very nice, for we are going to have some music."

"Let me see," said Danmer. "I have so many engagements, being only in town for so short a time, that I think I can scarcely manage to come."

"Oh yes, you can," replied Carlton. "I will get a box of cigars for you by that time to take down with you. Surely *somebody* would be very much disappointed if you did not come, especially if she heard that you were in town."

Again a slight flush of annoyance came over Danmer's face, and went as unnoticed as before.

"Well, I will manage to be there," Danmer said more decidedly.

"That's right," replied Carlton; "don't be later than eight. By the bye, will you have some tickets for the theatre to-night? if you cannot go, perhaps some friends of yours will."

With these words he rose, went into his bed-room, and took out of his coat pocket an order, which he handed to Danmer, who took it, thanked him, and rose to depart.

"Well, Fred," Carlton said; "don't fail on Thursday evening at the Philadelphia."

"All right; good-bye, old fellow."

Danmer shook hands with his friend or acquaintance, and left.

Whatever his motive may have been for calling upon Carlton, his conversation, which partook throughout of the same character as that which we have just reported, did not betray it. Perhaps Carlton's invitation to the Philadelphia left questions unasked, on the part of Danmer, which he otherwise would have put. It is one thing to introduce a subject yourself at your own convenience and in your own way, and another to have it alluded to by others unexpectedly—that is very probably why Danmer felt annoyed at the mention of “somebody.”

After Frederick had gone, Carlton wrote two notes of invitation—one to Hugh Neilson, and the other to T. T. Thompson, both “Care of Messrs. Snyder & Co.”

CHAPTER IX.

EMILY DANMER, the more she reflected on the contents of the letter she had received, the more uneasy she became in her mind. Her brother had written to her in his usual style—that he found himself in a peculiar pecuniary embarrassment. The chestnut he bought had come down with him; fortunately he did not get hurt, but the horse was knee-broken and lame on the off fore leg; it was impossible for him to get even £10 for it. But as his duties made it imperative that he should have a horse, he had to buy another, for which he gave a bill, which two brother officers endorsed to oblige him. Without the additional security of those two names the horse-dealer would have insisted upon cash payment. He had not a shilling at his command. The legitimate expenses consequent upon his position were greatly increased through the fact that the majority of the officers of his regiment had large private fortunes, and entered, as a body—at mess, and by balls and other amusements, which they arranged by way of return for the hospitalities they had received

from the inhabitants,—into a considerable expenditure, in which he must necessarily take his share, as exclusion in that respect would render his social relations towards his brother officers in the regiment unbearable. He had also to get a new uniform—an important item, and had some other unforeseen expenses. His father, as Emily knew, had made him, only a week or two ago, a handsome extra allowance, which sum went to meet previous engagements. What was he to do? If the bill could not be met by him at maturity, it would cause him to leave the regiment. His brother officers would be called upon to pay, and his honour, in consequence of his default, would be impaired. Such was his explanation to account for his want of money. The reasons were very plausibly put, and the alternative, should he not get the money, was dreadful.

He hardly could expect that Emily should help him out of his difficulty. From his very boyhood, however, she had been a resource to him in trouble. And never did he apply to her without getting some relief or assistance. His relation towards her, in that respect, was not a matter of intellect or of calculation, but rested simply upon an instinctive feeling, or perhaps a presentiment that great dangers in store for him in life would be averted by her.

Emily felt a heavy responsibility placed on her. She knew her father's character and his means. She was aware that in the same measure as it had pleased her father to make his son this extra allowance, it

would irritate him to find how embarrassed Frederick was withal. This was exactly a case which would determine Major Danmer to make a stand, to prevent which, the influence of both his wife and daughter combined might prove ineffectual. And above all, if she could avoid giving her father pain—for the revelation of her brother's difficulty would hurt him much—she would rather make a great personal sacrifice. At all events, he could always be appealed to in the end, if other means failed. As regarded her mother, she would have had no hesitation in consulting her, or in confiding in her, but she felt that such a step would place her mother, as wife of the major, in a false position. The daughter might plead her reasons for withholding a secret from her parents with success, where the wife would be looked upon with reproach.

Her brother's career was at stake: some sacrifice must be made if she could make it—her father need not make it. In her quiet, considerate, but unhesitating way, she wrote a letter to her brother, to the effect that she knew that, without great personal sacrifice, their father was not in a position to send him the money required, especially so immediately after the last remittance; that for that reason alone she considered it injudicious to apply to him just now, if it could possibly be avoided; that she enclosed him fifteen pounds in banknotes to-day, and placed her jewellery, which comprised the diamond bracelet, brooch and rings, which aunt Mary had left her, at his disposal. Perhaps he would find means not to part with the

jewellery altogether, by merely depositing it as security for a certain period, before the lapse of which a way might possibly be devised for redeeming it. Her letter ended with expressions of solicitude for his happiness and sincere affection. If in such a case kindness, unalloyed with reproach, is no reproach, there was none contained in Emily's letter.

Emily had never reproached her brother with anything. Whenever he appealed to her for assistance she rendered it, as much as in her power lay, with exquisite grace. Whenever Frederick got into a scrape the circumstances accompanying it were of such a nature as to constitute a corresponding reproach.

In reality, Frederick's horse did not come down with him, nor had he bought a second horse, and still he was without one.

He had bought Mr. Whitman's chestnut by giving a bill for it, with two brother officers' names; that bill he dishonoured—it was the identical one to which Mr. Harris Harris alluded during his interview with him. The chestnut he lost by betting.

Some of Frederick Danmer's embarrassments may be clearly traced to his inclination towards gambling. The observation, that man cannot be tainted in one thing without the danger of being tainted in all, is but too true. Perhaps gambling was a very subordinate propensity in Frederick, and only thrust to the surface by a hope of retrieving himself from difficulties into which the indulgence of some other passion had thrown him. He was not slow in answering Emily's

letter, and in urging her to forward the casket with the jewellery without delay.

We should do Emily injustice if we supposed that the parting with her ornaments caused her a struggle. Certainly she regretted it, but after all it was only a slight regret compared with the painful prospect of the ultimate discovery by her parents of her brother's position, and was altogether thrown into the background by the anxious, disquieting doubts that arose in her mind as to Frederick's career.

Major Danmer was not rich, his income was moderate, and he had, on one or two occasions, strained a point to assist his son with money over and above the handsome allowance he made him.

He was not of a speculating turn of mind, and from the beginning the funds at his disposal were invested in very safe stock at a very moderate interest. Like many other people with fixed incomes, through the rise of all necessities of life he found that formerly he could live better on, say, £600 a year, than on £1000 now. Through the pressure brought upon him, principally by his son, he was induced to sell certain amounts out of one stock, and to invest them in shares of companies yielding higher dividends. As is not unusual in such cases, the change or exchange was rather for the worse, as it entailed a loss upon him, the shares having experienced a considerable fall in the market, which made the major fear for the stability of the company, and sell out again.

Although this loss was not large enough to be of

any vital consequence to him, still it was a step backwards. Emily felt that if her brother fell into further pecuniary entanglements, relief from her father would not be possible without causing an alteration in the major's style of living. She thought it her duty to inform her brother of this, and, when she sent the jewellery, she wrote him a letter to that effect—a sensible, quiet, affectionate letter, of which he took no other notice than merely acknowledging, in haste for post, the receipt of the letter and the jewellery, and promising to write again in a few days, which he did not do, having no occasion, then, to ask for anything for himself.

It is possible that if her brother had been in a less entangled position he might have written a very reassuring letter of thanks to his sister, but as his position was such that Emily's sacrifice by no means relieved him effectually, he did not write what he did not feel. Nor did he know what epistle he might have to send to his sister next, so poor Emily did not get many thanks, or the satisfaction which she ought to have received for her sisterly affection.

"Here, Emily," said her father to her one day, not long after she had sent her jewels to Frederick, "is an invitation to a ball at Plymptown House on Thursday week."

Under ordinary circumstances this communication would have given her pleasure.

"To a ball, papa!" Emily said in rather a startled tone, but as he had no reason whatever for suspecting

that his communication would not be welcome, this made no impression upon him. He laughingly told her to be sure to look her best on the occasion. Emily had collected her thoughts, and replied in a cheerful manner—

“ Well, I will try, papa.”

She took the first opportunity of retiring to her room for the purpose of taking counsel with herself what to do under the embarrassing circumstances in which she was unexpectedly placed.

Her room was the realization of neatness, exquisite cleanliness, and comfort, without in the least conveying an idea of expensiveness. It had a cheerful look-out on gardens, the resort of many singing birds, whose sweet untutored notes gave her unalloyed pleasure. Her sympathies were with the free songsters in the trees, whose voices gave forth sounds of gladness, and she loved the song of the lark, while the most thrilling notes of the canary in its gilded cage—that beautiful little songster from sunnier climes, which is treated as if nature gave it wings only to beat them against its prison bars in a foreign land—caused her no feeling but one of sadness.

The carpet had a pale ground with small flowers, as if they had been strewn over it. The covers of the sofa and chairs, and the drapery of the windows and bed were of chintz that nearly matched, all fresh and simple, yet elegant. On the walls were some chromolithographs, and a few water-colour paintings of landscapes, apparently of some favourite places, perhaps

painted by herself; also photographs of her father and mother, and conspicuously one of her brother in his full-dress uniform. There was a writing-table and a work-table, and altogether the room had an inhabited air, and gave one the impression of cosiness as well as quietness and repose, with which at this moment her mind by no means harmonized.

As her motives in parting with the jewellery were so pure and so judicious, it was less on her own account that she dreaded the discovery of their absence by her parents, than on theirs and her brother's. To devise a plan that would obviate the probability of a direct question as to why she did not wear them at Lady Plymptown's, and consequently the necessity for a direct answer, was the task she had set herself to perform. The thought of matters taking such a turn as to force her to be untruthful to her parents, between whom and herself no cloud of distrust had hitherto come, was most distressing to her, while she could only decide in her own mind whether the alternative of disclosing the real state of affairs was not more so.

Was she justified, in such a dilemma, in saying deliberately what she knew to be false?—more than that, to say a falsehood of her own invention? Had she done wrong in assisting her brother? Would her father blame her, if he knew all, for withholding from him the true state of his son's position, especially from the point of view that nothing but his authority, if even that, could have wrought a change in Frederick's pernicious course?

Such were the questions that crowded upon Emily's mind. How is it that they took that very disquieting shape now, and not before? No, she could not have done wrong in relieving her brother in his trouble; and if she had at the time disclosed his difficulties to her father, it might have led to very serious consequences, by impairing the good relations between father and son. Her conscience began to be more reassured as regarded the course she had taken. She fully remembered the exact standpoint to which the pressure of circumstances then drove her, and from which, weighing all *pros* and *cons*, she saw even now no other issue than the one that presented itself in the beginning.

Still, there remained the fear of discovery, and the task to avert it in a manner that would not compromise her. Was she justified in inventing a falsehood in case the secret could not be kept in any other way?—this question thrust itself again to the foreground—to do evil that good may come? Was it evil, or was it choosing the lesser of two evils?

Emily was for the first time in her life placed in the painful and embarrassing position of having to exercise, in a matter of moment, her intellectual faculties to decide a question of moral issue. When she first resolved upon sending her brother the jewellery, did she not foresee that the time might—must come when an inquiry from her parents concerning it would lead to a discovery? This last reflection still more tranquilized her mind, for while

she answered the question in the affirmative, the support she then felt presented itself again, and, if possible, in a stronger degree—it was trust, trust in Providence. She would not do evil that good might come, she would not allow any want of confidence to come between her parents and her by rendering them suspicious as to her veracity. She would simply do her duty and trust to the future, to circumstances. Through circumstances she was led into her present position; from circumstances she hoped to get relief.

What a beautiful thing it is to do strictly one's duty, and to trust to a higher Power as to the result! Who knows the issue of anything? How comparatively easy it is "to bear all things," if we act conscientiously! What thousands and thousands do not know, or care to know, even with one foot in the grave, Emily's clear moral perception and feminine intellect pointed out to her in the beginning of her entrance into responsible life, and her beautiful pensive eyes reassumed that serene and spiritual light which gave them so great a charm.

With the returning repose to her mind her senses became again accessible to the attractions of the outer world. She heard the birds again singing merrily. She sat down opposite the window, and looked out on the gardens half dreamily. How lovely she looked in her light fresh cambric morning dress! Suddenly she rose and went to her writing-desk. It struck her that Frederick must be written to: he must be informed of her having to go to a ball at Plymptown House,

and of the possible consequences to him. She had, in her own mind, conceived an idea which she hoped would prevent the necessity of an explanation. Did she think it just possible that her brother might be in a position to send her the casket, that she might wear the bracelet, etc., that one night? Not on reflection.

“My dear brother,” she wrote, “we have not heard from you since you acknowledged to me the receipt of the jewellery. I have been looking forward, with some anxiety, to further intelligence from you, especially with regard to the successful arrangement of your difficulty. I trust that it is not illness that has prevented you from writing. I am happy to say that papa and mamma are both well. The almost chronic headache from which papa suffered a short time ago has entirely left him. He looks very well indeed, and has recovered his cheerful spirits which some vexatious money affairs had ruffled. I must now tell you that we have an invitation to a ball at Plymptown House on Thursday week, and papa says we are to go. I think it right to inform you of this, dear Frederick, as there is a possibility that either papa or mamma may inquire for the ornaments, which would impose upon me the painful duty of disclosing their fate. I should feel so sorry for papa, and also for you, if this occurred just now. I have been thinking whether I should not make natural flowers do, so as to make jewellery unnecessary, except the locket mamma gave me. I shall endeavour

to dress as simply as possible. I only trust that I shall succeed in procuring the suitable flowers, and that papa and mamma will be satisfied with my choice, and allow me to have my own way in the matter.

"I will tell you all about the ball when it is over.

"Your affectionate sister,

"EMILY.

"P.S.—I intend to have aunt Mary's Indian muslin and lace made up."

This letter being sent, she made up her mind to acquaint her mother with her plan of wearing a dress which would be suitable with flowers only. Through the aunt who had left her the jewellery, she became also possessed of a piece of beautiful Indian muslin, very beautiful in texture, such as is seldom seen out of India, and some valuable old lace.

In thinking over the serious consequences that would arise to her brother, and probably to her father too, if her brother's embarrassments became known to her father, she made up her mind to try to make the Indian muslin and lace relieve her from the predicament. Of obtaining her mother's consent she had no doubt, for she was one of those amiable beings who think those they love can do no wrong, and besides, she had a perfect reliance on Emily's judgment. With her father, however, the case was different; for, though loving her dearly, he had decidedly a will of his own, and she remembered a remark he made when the casket first displayed

its sparkling contents as her own, that the first time she wore them must be at some great entertainment.

The ball at Plymptown House was the first to which they had been invited since the mourning for her aunt was over. However, she did not despair of making even him a partisan of her choice. She knew that she was beautiful (all women who are beautiful know that, whether it makes them vain or not), and that a dress composed of Indian muslin, choice lace, and flowers might produce a toilet not unworthy of the ball-room of an earl, though the jewels were absent.

The first thing after dinner the major asked his daughter—"Well, Emily, what is the dress to be for Lady Plymptown's? We must launch out a little. I won't grudge you a cheque on the occasion."

"Oh, mamma and I have fixed on a dress, haven't we, mamma? and we won't ask for a cheque yet—we intend to surprise you."

"Yes, my dear," said her mother, "and very beautiful it will be."

The father looked at his daughter with affectionate admiration for a moment, and said, "Well, I think I may trust you both."

Emily felt greatly relieved at her father's acquiescence, for the more she reflected on her brother's long silence the more ominous it appeared to her. The fifteen pounds, which was part of Emily's allowance for dress, having gone to Frederick with the jewels, she was rather embarrassed how to

obtain suitable flowers for the style of dress without asking her father for some money. Certainly he offered her the cheque; still, as she was supposed to have some money at her disposal, and intended to win her father's approval by an elegant style of simplicity, she was naturally reluctant to ask for means just now.

In the mean time Frederick had received her letter, and felt not a little uneasy as to its contents. The thought of his father being informed of what had passed between him and Emily, greatly disturbed him. He went out of his way to look at the occurrence with other eyes than his own—that is, from the point of view his father would take,—and felt that the major would pass a verdict to the effect that his conduct was outrageous, and that it was highly unbecoming “an officer and a gentleman” to deliberately victimize his self-sacrificing, affectionate sister. She had expressed a doubt of being able to get suitable flowers, so his mind ran on assisting her in that particular, in order to facilitate her proposed arrangement. His circumstances were more serious than his sister or any one else knew but himself, and if his father once got a clue to them, there was no knowing what the consequences would be to him.

In the afternoon of the day on which he received his sister's letter, he happened to be invited to a lawn party at Sir Herbert Forrester's.

Forrest Court was situated about four miles in the country from the town where Frederick was quartered.

One of his brother officers, Captain Wilmot, had a dog-cart and a stepper, which took them to Sir Herbert's residence. It was late in spring, and what a lovely drive theirs was !

Frederick and his friend were favoured by splendid weather. They drove along spankingly. Danmer looked very thoughtful. He was so absorbed that the many and varied beauties of the scene were shut out from his senses. That black individual, known in polite society as "the old gentleman," makes people pay very dearly for their deviations from the right path.

"Why, Danmer," said Wilmot, "what is the matter with you ? you look glum. Come, rouse up, my boy ; make yourself look amiable before we get to the ladies. How glorious the country looks ! What a splendid lot of foxgloves there are about the hedges here, and how elegant these ferns are !"

"Very," said Frederick, in a way which indicated that he did not care one straw about the ferns, nor about the whole charming rural scenery surrounding him.

"There's happiness for you," said Wilmot, pointing at two little boys on the bare back of a donkey, without bridle or halter, and coming towards them at a full trot. The bigger boy of the two sat in front, and the smaller behind, with his two little arms round the waist of the other, who had a slight stick in his hand, which he flourished in the air, giving the donkey a hit for the purpose of passing the dog-cart with more

éclat, on which the spirited little animal gave a tremendous kick with both hind legs. This made the boys fall forward in a most ludicrous manner, and annihilated altogether the striking effect they intended to produce.

Both friends laughed heartily, and Frederick, although far from having peace of mind, was roused by this little incident into a more cheerful mood.

"Sir Herbert's sisters," Wilmot said, "are very fine girls: if you are inclined for matrimony, you had better show yourself to the best advantage. He will be an enviable fellow who gets either of the Misses Forrester—they are very superior girls and have lots of tin."

"Why don't you go in for the luck yourself?" said Frederick.

"That won't do, my boy," replied Wilmot; "I am promised."

With this sort of conversation the distance between the barracks and Forrest Court was soon got over.

The lodge gates, as they drove up, were hospitably opened to them by a fresh-looking, elderly woman, very neatly and cleanly dressed, who, curtsying respectfully, smilingly held the gates open for them to pass in.

The moment you entered the grounds, you were convinced that you were in the domains of a person not only wealthy, but disposed to employ his wealth in beautifying a scene which nature had endowed with great natural loveliness and capabilities. Every-

where the evidence of taste and cultivation was apparent. The roads and paths were in perfect order, and the grass was green and presented a surface like velvet. Here and there were clumps of rich and flowering shrubs, backed by stately forest trees, the growth of many generations.

After a drive of about ten minutes the young men came in sight of the house, in front of which there appeared a merry, laughing group of ladies, interspersed here and there with a few of the sterner sex. They immediately joined the party.

Lady Forrester, the presiding spirit of the family, was a handsome stately woman, this side of fifty. She had dark hair and a vivacious countenance. She was dressed richly and fashionably, and was a most popular person. Croquet parties were forming. They evidently waited for somebody.

In the mean time, before the games commence, we may describe Lady Forrester's two daughters. Georgina, the elder, was just twenty-one, and much resembled her mother. She was a brunette with rather haughty features, but handsome and very graceful. Her dress of rich magenta and white muslin tastefully trimmed, a coquettish-looking hat with a parrot's wing knowingly fixed at the side, corresponded exactly with the style of her beauty.

The younger daughter, Alice, is more difficult to describe. She was unlike her sister in every particular. Georgina was tall, and Alice was below the middle height, slender and sylph-like. Her hair was

pale golden, in rich profusion, with a gleam as if the sun was shining on it. And who shall describe the dreamy beauty of her large grey eyes, which seemed to look into your soul with an inquiring, and sometimes a pitying glance? She, like her sister, was dressed in coloured muslin, but hers was of more simplicity of pattern and style of make. She had chosen one with a white ground, marked with a small blue flower. Her straw hat had a wreath of clematis. She moved about amongst their guests with a gentle courtesy which was not without an air of reserve.

While we have been describing the fair daughters of Lady Forrester, the person, or rather personage for whom the party had been waiting to commence croquet, arrived on the scene, accompanied by several gentlemen who had been with him to the stables.

Sir Herbert Forrester was one whom it seems fortune had delighted to place in a position which marked him as one of the most enviable of men. He was twenty-five, handsome, tall, rich, and master of all this fair domain, having inherited it when only ten years old. He had lately returned from a lengthened stay on the Continent, with the avowed intention of settling at home.

His mother, to whose sole guardianship he had been left, had brought him up most judiciously. His natural disposition was such as to render him an eminently fit person for the responsible position in which Providence had placed him.

Man proposes and God disposes. Man entails his

estates and lets them go from father to son ; but man has no power as to the spirit that is to govern after him. There is nothing, of whatever apparent stability from its magnitude, that cannot be ruinously managed ; and the slightest tendency towards illegitimate expenditure is often the germ which leads ultimately to destruction : it is only a matter of time.

Sir Herbert had the legitimate tendencies of mind and the dispassionate temperament, which are such trusty allies in the faithful stewardship of worldly matters. He was not one of those erratic geniuses who astonish the world by occasional flashes, leaving the intervals very questionable periods of their lives. He was not eccentric. In the same degree as he was trustworthy in not deviating from the safe course, he was not likely to be the pioneer of any great social or political reform, which might require a setting aside of conceptions, conventionally, traditionally, or politically upheld. He was of a truly Saxon type : fair-haired, blue-eyed, broad-chested, and of a very clear complexion, which many a lady envied him. His teeth were faultless.

Having reached the lawn, he welcomed Danmer and Wilmot, by shaking hands with them, and after a few other welcomings of guests, ladies and gentlemen, who had arrived during his absence at the stables, and the performance of some introductions, principally for the sake of facilitating the matching of partners in the game, croquet began.

It was a pretty sight, the sunny side of life, to see

young and old amuse themselves at the healthful, social game of croquet. But what is the reason that young ladies, who are incomparably more precious than young gentlemen, are generally less scarce than the sterner sex on such occasions? As is not unusual, elderly gentlemen were pressed into the service.

There was the Rev. Mr. Dale, a man between sixty and seventy, a stern magistrate and a severe churchman, who, when the name of an eminent dissenter like Robert Hall was mentioned, would shake his head and say, "Very good, very clever; but not sound, not sound!" and look exceedingly profound, but hardly profound enough to encourage you to ask his opinion concerning some Scriptural passage obscure to your own mind.

There was Captain Torrens, a retired Indian officer, a gentleman past seventy, with silver-grey hair and beard, yet with a figure as straight as an arrow and as youthful as if he were only thirty. He was quite an aristocrat and the leader of society within some miles of the village of Forreston. Whenever any new residents settled in that neighbourhood, its section of the upper ten thousand would keep its breath till Captain Torrens had pronounced the verdict of worthy or not worthy to be visited. When once this fiat was pronounced in his favour it opened, to the fortunate new comer, the portal into their society, which he might enjoy all his life, unless he misconducted himself socially or his worldly resources dried up from some cause or other.

Captain Torrens himself had only very small means—scarcely any income but his pension. He was a widower with an only daughter. She was, of course, a perfect gentlewoman, but *passée* and still Miss Torrens.

The village medical man, Mr. Miller, of questionable pedigree (it was rumoured that his father was a tradesman in a remote county), some time before had had the courage to propose for Miss Torrens.

“What!” said the captain, when formally applied to for his consent; “give my daughter to be the wife of a country apothecary? *Never!*”

Whether the proud captain dragged his superannuated sword out of its rusty scabbard and, by way of a valediction, hit with its flat side the back of the defeated and retreating practitioner, we know not; it is certain that he returned no more, and that Miss Torrens was, by her father’s peremptory decision, fated to remain a spinster. What will become of her when the old captain dies and his half-pay with him?

There was Mr. Brent, a country banker, whose money was more potent than his accent was pure. Besides his banking business, he competed with the neighbouring farmers in the milk, butter, and pig line. He was very amiable with his clerks, especially with his manager, but he always turned a deaf ear to their timid, respectful remonstrances against sitting night after night in the office, burning the midnight oil until the figures they added danced like imps before

their eyes. He, also, had a mallet in his hand and knocked the balls about with an air of *sans souci*, as if we lived still in that primitive age of simple exchange—beads for shells, powder for ivory—without any currency from the Mint or the Bank of England. He, also, was a magistrate, and one whom people thought to be uncharitably severe on the bench.

These old gentlemen had quite youthful partners. We are pretty sure, though, that these young damsels would have enjoyed the game much more if their partners had each been about half a century younger, in spite of the fact that one is not old while the heart is young.

To the Rev. Mr. Dale there was an odious person present who played against him—we mean the Rev. Augustus Mandeville, a young Ritualistic curate, who patronized his ecclesiastical tailor on the same principle that the sportsman does the hunting-breeches artist. This young clergyman had a perpetual curacy in the neighbourhood, and was particularly bent upon gaining influence over the fair sex, and more particularly over the eldest daughter of Lady Forrester. It was at her request that, half condescendingly, and, as it were, under protest, he had joined the game, which in reality he enjoyed, for he was an excellent player, and naturally of a social, cheerful disposition; but the demeanour which he thought becoming his priestly character made him adopt a dignified, half-mysterious reticence, which is very imposing with some very young and middle-aged spinsters.

He had no reason to complain of a want of success with the ladies of his neighbourhood—he had already found great favour with them, and at all times, when church decorations were thought necessary, a bevy of fair girls awaited his mandates, each herself representing, in her own person, the goddess Flora, bringing to him her bountiful offerings from her realm—if one may be pardoned for mentioning a heathen goddess in connection with a sacred place. Up to this time Miss Georgina Forrester was not one of his disciples, though she had shown no hostility to his rule.

There were several matrons who were not playing, amongst whom were Mrs. Dale and Mrs. Brent. These were sitting in the drawing-room, at the window which was open to the lawn.

Not far from the croquet lawn was pitched a very gay-looking marquee, through the draped front of which might be seen neat-handed Phyllises, presiding over steaming urns of tea and coffee, while ices, cakes, fruit, and other refreshments of a more exhilarating nature, were not wanting. The gentlemen made frequent visits to this tent, coming back with their hands laden with something which they hoped would be acceptable to the ladies.

Amongst the beauties for which Forrest Court was known was a lake, about ten minutes' walk from the house partly natural and partly fashioned by art. It seems as if nature had been in one of her most genial moods when this lake was planned. About a

quarter of a mile from the house, and visible from the whole of its southern side, was an amphitheatre of rugged rocks, extending half a mile in width, with trees growing thickly in the interstices to the top of the banks, where they increased in size and reached far back, till some hills in the distance terminated the view.

About the centre of this semi-circle an opening occurred amongst the trees, and there came over the rocks, in summer and winter, a rushing, impetuous stream of water, dashing, leaping, dancing, and sparkling, throwing its spray right and left over the trees, and forming a misty veil, which made the beauties of the scene even more beautiful.

After falling about forty feet into a basin worked into the rock by its force, the waters quietly spread themselves over the bosom of the lovely lake, which, a hundred yards from the fall, was tranquil and smooth as a mirror. The lake altogether was about a mile and a half in circumference, and at the end opposite the cascade the banks gradually sloped away to the level of the park. Nature had thrown trees here and there bountifully over the banks, but art had smoothed the sides and planted ferns and flowers and rare shrubs, and placed in winding paths rustic seats overshadowed by foliage.

But what was considered the masterpiece of artistic achievement was an island near the centre of the lake, in full view of the waterfall. Its two features were a ruined chapel and a weeping willow.

It may shock our readers to be told that the ruined chapel was designed and built to represent a ruin, and that it was used by Sir Herbert partly as a repository for his fishing-tackle. It had, however, other uses, for artfully contrived in it was a good-sized room, where occasionally in the summer Lady Forrester would bring a few of her most intimate friends to hear her daughters sing in the moonlight. Sir Herbert, who played on the flute, frequently accompanied them.

Frederick Danmer, so soon as he was fairly launched into the playing, and partaking of the sprightly conversation that was going on around him, threw off his anxiety, and was as much interested in what was going on as any one of the party.

Captain Wilmot, with whom he came, was an intimate friend of Sir Herbert's, and his *fiancée* was related to the Forrester family, so Frederick was introduced to them under favourable auspices. He had Alice Forrester as a partner in the second game. She took her part in it with a quiet grace, not chatting and laughing, as the girls who were playing near her seemed to be.

Once or twice during the game he caught in her glance a look which he thought strange—it was one of those involuntary, soul-searching, compassionate looks, of which we spoke before. Some shadow of the care which oppressed him must have passed over his features and presented some image of suffering to her mind. He thought her very lovely, but with a beauty more ethereal than earthly.

When the game was over, Sir Herbert, to whom his sister seemed to be an object of particular care, invited her and Frederick to go with him to the marquise to get some refreshment. While there, and the young men were talking, it came out in conversation that Sir Herbert had met Major Danmer three years before in Paris, and he expressed himself delighted at making the acquaintance of his son, and cordially invited him to ride over sometimes in the morning, when he would show him his stables, etc. He was here called away by one of his guests, and requested Frederick to take Alice to Lady Forrester. He walked by her side somewhat silently. She opened the conversation by saying—

“Is it long since you have seen your father, Mr. Danmer? I have heard my brother speak several times of his having met Major Danmer in Paris; he always refers to that time with pleasure. Your father, Mr. Danmer,” she said, looking up to him smiling, “seems to be Herbert’s model soldier and gentleman. I think he gave my brother some good advice, or did him some kindness while they were there, which he is grateful for.”

“Ah!” said Frederick, “this is not the first time that I have been well received in consequence of my father’s virtues. He is a model father as well as a model gentleman, as I can testify. I have not seen him for more than two months, but I heard from my sister this morning, and he was quite well.”

“You have sisters, Mr. Danmer?”

"No, only one."

"Was she in Paris with your father?"

"No, she remained at home with my mother. She has never been out of England. My father went there to settle some business for a friend."

While speaking of his sister the same shadow seemed to pass over his face, giving Alice the impression that some painful idea was connected with his sister. By this time they had reached the conservatory, where Lady Forrester was.

On entering, Frederick was struck with admiration of the *coup d'œil*: a long vista with a lofty roof of glass, and a flooring of mosaic pattern, composed of coloured tiles, and all around everywhere a bewildering profusion of rare flowers in the highest state of cultivation and beauty.

Lady Forrester was in the midst of a group of ladies. Alice approached her, and said, "Mamma, Mr. Danmer is the son of Major Danmer, whom Herbert met in Paris."

Lady Forrester's face lighted up with animation and kindness as she extended her hand to Frederick. After having cordially welcomed him and chatted a few minutes, she said, smiling—

"I am really quite glad to know you. Tell Major Danmer, when you see him, that he is no stranger to me. You must tell me all about him and yourself, not now, for I have duties outside. I must leave you to Alice and the flowers." So saying, she left the conservatory with Mrs. Dale and some other ladies.

Frederick continued his walk round the conservatory with Alice, admiring the extreme beauty and brilliancy of the flowers, and Alice called his particular attention to some camellias that were magnificent.

Flowers were to Alice as familiar friends; she treated them with care and affection, as if in some way they were conscious of her love. Pointing to some varieties of camellias, she said—

“Mamma is going to send some of these next week to Lady Plymptown, who is giving a ball. Do you know Lady Plymptown?”

“Yes, and my father and mother and sister are going to the ball.”

“And you,” she said, “are you going up? I am sure Herbert would be very glad if you would go with him, if you are going.”

“I am not so fortunate as to have an invitation, and if I had I don't think I could get leave,” said he.

By this time they had come out on the lawn, where the party were beginning to assemble to bid farewell to Lady Forrester. Captain Wilmot was looking for Frederick. As he was shaking hands with Lady Forrester, Sir Herbert joined them, and said—

“Mr. Danmer, Wilmot has promised to dine with us to-morrow, and we shall be very glad if you will come too.”

“Yes, do,” said Lady Forrester; “we shall be delighted.”

Frederick accepted the invitation, and in another

minute had mounted the dog-cart, Sir Herbert calling out after them—

"I will call for you both to-morrow at three o'clock, at the barracks, with the waggonette."

To which Wilmot returned the answer, "All right," and Frederick lifting his hat, they drove off.

After they had passed the lodge, which required a little steering as the horse was very fresh, Wilmot examined Frederick with a droll look, saying—

"I am looking to see what there is so attractive about you. You have thrown a spell over the whole Forrester family. 'Mamma' will be delighted to see you to dinner to-morrow, who never saw you in her life until to-day; Sir Herbert comes for you himself for fear of mistakes; and the charming, celestial Alice, who is as shy as a dove, seems to be quite at home with you. Tell us the secret, my boy, for I was never asked to dinner until I had proposed for their cousin. They are the nicest people in the world, and you must be a very good boy to be such a pet."

Frederick heard him to the end, and then said—

"You may stop your chaff: it is not me, it is my father. I happen to be my father's son; my father met Sir Herbert in Paris, and I think did him some kindness, and I am to reap the reward, it seems."

"That's it!" said Wilmot; "all right."

The fact is, Captain Wilmot knew more of Frederick's entanglements and selfishness of character than Frederick thought he did, and he was a little

uneasy at the unexpected intimacy that was likely to follow his introduction.

The next day, at three o'clock, Sir Herbert was punctual. They drove again along the beautiful road to Forrest Court, this time behind two handsome bays. They talked of various sports. Sir Herbert told them of some fine pheasant shooting he had, and hoped they would both come to the Court for a week's shooting in September. On arriving at the stable-yard they descended, and went to see the horses.

The estate of Forrest Court was possessed of a large rent-roll, totally unencumbered. The long minority of the heir allowed the rents to accumulate, and on his coming of age the large balance at his banker's made him a rich man, independently of his yearly income, so that, if ever a man could indulge his tastes for hunting, racing, or any other kind of expensive sport or pastime, Sir Herbert was the man. And he did indulge his taste for hunting. His hunters were matchless: he had six of the finest in the country, including an Irish mare, whose pedigree, if true, was most marvellous. These were duly examined and commented on; then followed the hacks and the carriage horses; and last, but not least deserving attention, were those ridden by the ladies, amongst which was a superannuated pony, Alice's peculiar property, which was fat and saucy, but, as the groom assured them, "he hadored his young missis."

Next came the kennels (for Sir Herbert kept a pack of fox-hounds himself), and to go through them was an

interesting sight. The whippers-in and the dog-boys had got the dogs in most perfect order and discipline. On two sides of a long wide yard stood the dogs' houses. In front of each row of them was a running stream, each about a foot and a half wide, and less than a foot deep; the bottom and sides were of bricks cemented, and the water was quite clear. Between the rows of dogs' houses and the stream there was a space of about five feet. The whole of the centre of the yard was paved with rather flat, smooth stones, about six inches by four, and that, as well as everything connected with the kennels, was scrupulously clean.

At one end of the yard, overlooking it and forming part of the boundary of it, was a small house, or cottage: this was the dispensary and surgery of the establishment. Here were dog medicines of various kinds in bottles and jars, with quantities of dried herbs hanging in bundles on the walls. There was every necessary utensil and implement to afford relief physically and surgically to the canine patients. At the other end of the yard, some short distance beyond the enclosure, was another small substantial building, with a tall chimney: this was the cooking-house for the dogs. When their feeding time arrived the sight was interesting and strange to the uninitiated.

At a certain sign from the head whipper-in, who enters the yard from the cooking-house, followed by his attendants, every dog, whatever he might have

been doing just before, sits down in the front of his house. As there may be about fifty-six couple of hounds, the process is well worth watching. Every dog is still—that is, he keeps himself in one place; but there is no stillness in him—every muscle, fibre, and nerve is quivering as their eyes are all turned in one direction, on the buckets of food.

Each side is fed at the same time. A whipper-in, with a powerful dog-whip in his hand, walks in front, and his attendant gives to each dog his allotted portion, sufficient for him.

Sometimes a young hound, or one with a more mercurial temperament than the others, will in his excitement and in anticipation of the meal, rush up to the feeder—his reward is invariably a cut with the whip, and he has to wait until the very last.

As soon as all are fed, and not till then, at a sign or a sound, which the dogs understand, they leave their sitting posture, and in one moment all is apparently the wildest confusion. The dogs may bark and jump and frolic about, all within a certain discipline. Generally after their meals they rush to the water, and then, for a short time after, the men have something to do; the dogs are like boys out of school, and sometimes they commence a fight, which is instantly checked. Twice a day on off-days they are taken out by the mounted huntsman and followers for exercise. The whole arrangements of the kennel department struck the friends as the perfection of order and discipline.

By this time it was necessary for them to retire to their rooms to dress for dinner. When Frederick descended to the drawing-room, he found Lady Forrester already there, with two other ladies from the neighbourhood. She received him most cordially, and Frederick was struck with admiration by the appearance of her graceful and handsome figure. Her dinner dress set off her matronly good looks to perfection. She wore a dark green velvet dress, made plain but trimmed with old Brussels point. The bodice was cut square, and the velvet sleeves terminated at the elbow, from which fell deep ruffles of the same kind of lace. She also wore rich gold ornaments; and in her hair, which was profuse and dressed in the prevailing fashion, were fastened by a golden butterfly lappets of the same valuable lace; while over her shoulders fell a thin web of lace, which was an apology for a shawl. She gave you the idea that she knew that she was handsome and comely, and enjoyed the knowledge, but not with any air of coquetry or anything unbecoming her age and position as the mistress and directress of her son's large establishment.

Just before dinner was announced the two Misses Forresters entered together, and immediately afterwards Sir Herbert and some gentlemen guests, amongst whom was the Rev. Augustus Mandeville, in strictly High Church dinner costume.

Miss Forrester spoke a few words politely to Frederick, and then passed on to the sofa, where

two elderly ladies were sitting, while Alice smiled and bowed as she shook hands with him without speaking.

On dinner being announced Sir Herbert took in the Hon. Miss Jeliffe, one of the ladies before referred to; and his sister Georgina was appropriated by a dark, distinguished-looking man, who had not spoken, while the Rev. Augustus looked evidently disappointed, and offered his arm to Alice. Two or three gentlemen, who had no ladies to escort, came next, and then Lady Forrester called Frederick to her side, took his arm, and followed her guests to the dining-room.

Frederick, at home, had been accustomed to neatness and elegance; but it was the style which was bounded by a limited, though not penurious income. Here was ease and elegance supported by great wealth as well as taste. Everything was rich, profuse, and appropriate. Massive plate, costly china, well-trained servants, the choicest wines, and all giving you the feeling that it was their everyday life.

The conversation turned mostly on local affairs. A general election was impending, and Sir Herbert had been requested to stand for the county. He had been reticent as to his intention, and had not yet declared his political creed, which made each party in the county the more anxious to secure him; both thought, by unanswerable arguments, to convince him that their principles were the only means "of saving the country."

The Hon. Miss Jeliffe was eloquent on the subject of district visiting and flannels, and addressed her remarks across the table to the Rev. Augustus, sometimes to that young priest's annoyance, for he believed less in the efficacy of district visiting and female distribution of flannels than in that of the ceremonious elevation of the cross, and satin vestments. He was endeavouring to improve the opportunity by ascertaining the Ritualistic spiritual condition of his fair neighbour, Alice.

While the general conversation was proceeding, Lady Forrester asked Frederick many questions about his father and family, and said she had long wished to know Major and Mrs. Danmer, and that when she next went to London she would call upon them.

"Herbert is going up next Thursday week to Lady Plymptown's ball, and no doubt he will go at once to see the major."

"My father, mother, and sister will all be at Lady Plymptown's," replied Frederick.

"That will be very nice indeed," said Lady Forrester. "I am going to send Lady Plymptown some flowers. I wonder whether your sister would like some?"

Frederick felt quite grateful at the moment for the suggestion: it relieved him from an anxiety, and gratified a wish that he had no other means of accomplishing so effectually; for the flowers of Forrest Court conservatories were far superior to anything he could hope to buy, if he had the means. And, turning to Lady Forrester, he said—

"I am sure Emily will be delighted, for I happen to know that she is going to wear a dress with which flower ornaments are most appropriate."

"Very well," said Lady Forrester, "I will tell Alice, and she will see that the gardener attends to it: the flower region is her domain."

Frederick felt his mind relieved. He took Lady Forrester's offer as an omen that all things would go well, and that, for this time at least, he might hope to avert the disclosure of his affairs.

CHAPTER X.

Nor far from Regent's Park, and near Great Portland Street, a mother and daughter lived in lodgings. They were both *artistes*. The mother was a widow, the daughter not an only child, for she had a sister who was married to an actor, a comedian. Mrs. Gates's husband had gone to a better world about ten or twelve years ago. He played some wind instrument at the orchestra of a minor London theatre, and died of consumption, whether hereditary or brought on by too constant application to his professional duties, we know not. His life was not a bed of roses, for Mrs. Gates was a strong-minded woman—so we may reasonably suppose that he exchanged this life for a better one.

Fate had not apportioned to Mrs. Gates another, shall we say victim? in the shape of a second husband. The first one was a great loss to her, for he was the target of her piercing eloquence. As an old farmer of our acquaintance expresses it—"Nature is very stubborn-like," by which he means to say that things

do not exactly go the right way with him ; so Mrs. Gates, after her husband's death, found "nature" more stubborn than her husband had ever been. Like a sensible woman, however, she resigned herself to circumstances, as she found out that they were stronger than her strong-minded self. Her little daughter was then about twelve years of age. Many years ago Mrs. Gates had been an actress herself, but either she got tired of it, or the stage of her, and she had retired from it at the time her husband died. She was not without some musical abilities, and having procured an introduction to a lady of rank, possessing considerable social influence, she managed, after great privations and hardships, to gain a livelihood by giving lessons in music.

Her daughter very early showed great musical talent, as Mrs. Gates thought, and she determined to bring her out as a "star." The old adage that the wish is father to the thought, held also good with Mrs. Gates—her fond hope, that her daughter would become the means of making her very comfortable for the remainder of her (Mrs. Gates's) life, led her to venerate her daughter's gifts or abilities.

Arabella Gates, now about twenty-two years of age, was a girl of middle height, well-formed, dark-complexioned, dark-haired, dark-eyed. A stranger, from her appearance, would have taken her for an Italian rather than an English girl. She was not a refined beauty, but she was handsome. Her vivacious dark eyes were the index to a passionate soul, if not to a

mind of intellectual range. It is possible that if Arabella had had a better teacher than her mother, or had enjoyed the patronage of some influential personage in the musical world, she might have taken a different stand in her profession than she did. She had, for several seasons, succeeded in obtaining minor engagements for the opera, but her fame remained confined to the limits of her social acquaintances, who consisted of professional ladies and gentlemen as obscure as herself, and of others who delighted in frequenting the society of *artistes*. Fortunately for Arabella's happiness, she, being young and having life before her, did not realize her subordinate position in the musical world.

We trust our readers will not underrate Arabella because she was no "star." There have been so many stars that morally, socially, and intellectually deserved to be tabooed, that it is certainly no distinction to be a star, if one is nothing else.

If we take Arabella's opportunities into consideration, we cannot judge her other than favourably. There was her mother, Mrs. Gates, a vulgar, pretentious, scheming woman, and strong-minded, which latter quality, as we have already stated, used to distinguish her while poor Gates was yet alive. If she wanted to carry a point, or to prevent him from carrying one, she was thoroughly unscrupulous as to the means she used.

Thus the domestic scenes which impressed themselves upon poor little Arabella's mind were not of an

elevating nature, while the social circle in which she moved, and which is so powerful in stamping its peculiar standard of manners and morality upon its own members, was far from being refined. But the question as regards Arabella is less one of judging her with harshness or indulgence, than to take her exactly as she was. A gentleman would hardly have cared to marry her. Now we are coming upon a theme which causes us something of the same nervous sensitiveness we felt in beginning the chapter that introduced our heroine. A gentleman could not make up his mind to marry Arabella without preparing for social sacrifices on his part. We might have said at once that Arabella was not a lady. But, after all, this does not solve the difficulty, for as there are amongst the so-called working classes "nature's gentlemen," so Arabella might have been "a nature's lady."

"Bella, my dear," said Mrs. Gates, "what dress are you going to wear at the party on Thursday evening?"

"I was thinking of wearing my amber silk and the ornaments Frederick gave me."

"It is a fortunate thing that we have a sewing-machine, for without it we should never be able to dress as we do," said Mrs. Gates. "Dear me, what will become of this world? In my time"—here Mrs. Gates caught the reflection of her countenance in the looking-glass with a sort of satisfaction, as if "her time" might be only yesterday—"in my time

servants knew their places ; now they will dress like their mistresses. But I know where all this new-fangled conceit comes from. It is all imported from America, the land of liberty, where niggers are gentlemen and the helps are ladies."

To this Arabella made no reply, but looking over some dresses and silks in a drawer, she said—"What a pity this unmade dress is black silk, for just now I ought to have one or two more light-coloured ones !"

"It was very stupid of Frederick to give you anything black, for it is not lucky. By-the-by, it is time Mr. Frederick should be looked up."

"Oh ma, you know he is not his own master, he cannot get leave as he likes."

"Who talks of leave? You do not mean to say that he could not write ! It is several weeks now that we have not heard from him."

"You are mistaken," said Arabella ; "it is not a month since he wrote."

"A month or two months, it is all the same. If he does not show soon I'll see what he means."

"Don't, ma, talk that way ; he has to settle a great many things. Leave him to me."

"That's all very fine, but if you don't play your cards better than you have done, I shall have you on my hands all my life."

Poor Arabella, although bravely defending her absent swain, was not without anxiety and misgivings as to his behaviour generally of late. Unfortunately for herself, she did not view the matter from the same

standpoint as that of her mother, who looked at her daughter's engagement merely from a mercenary and social point of view. She was anxious that her daughter should marry a gentleman of good social standing and at least tolerably rich, and she thought Frederick Danmer, for he is the hero of her daughter's romance, much better off in worldly matters than he really was.

About a year before, when Arabella had a professional engagement for a short time in the town in which Frederick was quartered, it became the fashion of the moment to admire her, to extol her beauty and her singing, and all the young men of any pretension were anxious for an introduction to her. It was an agreeable and graceful pastime to offer bouquets to the young actress, to attend the performances, and to retire behind the scenes to pay her compliments.

Amongst the first who obtained an introduction to Arabella and her mother, who always accompanied her to the theatre and returned with her, was Frederick Danmer, who accomplished the introduction through Carlton, of whom he had some previous knowledge. His distinguished appearance and quiet respectful manner made from the first a very favourable impression on Arabella and also on her mother, whose good opinion he took care to conciliate. He had found his quarters very dull, and Arabella was handsome, rather clever and piquante, the fashion for the time, and very well disposed to appreciate his atten-

tions ; so he fell into the habit of constituting himself the daily attendant of herself and her mother, and occasionally escorting them to see the rural beauties of the neighbouring scenery, without for some time contemplating any consequences to himself or to any other person.

By-and-by there sprang up an attachment between the two young people. Shall we say that it was quite mutual ? Certainly there was a tender passion on either side ; still, the intentions of the pair were not identical. We do not mean to hint that all the sincerity was on Arabella's side, for Frederick's love was not insincere ; but, partly from the different social circumstances in which they were respectively placed, and partly owing to the peculiar bent of Frederick's character, he felt impelled to indulge in his *penchant* without acknowledging or caring to acknowledge to himself to what alternatives his entanglement ultimately must lead.

We do not exactly feel called upon to state all the objections that would have been raised against Frederick's marriage with Arabella on the part of the Danmer family, had she been an orphan. But look at Mrs. Gates as Frederick's mother-in-law ! Surely in his attachment the idea of such a mother-in-law could never have been contemplated by him !

On the other hand, Mrs. Gates never dreamt of the possibility of being considered, in case of her daughter's marriage, as an unwelcome appendage. On the contrary, wouldn't she take care that Arabella

should have no bother with the servants? wouldn't she take upon herself to bundle them out if they did not come up to her standard? wouldn't she make herself responsible that there should be no waste in the household, no ends of candles thrown away, no slovenly sifting of the coal ashes, no policeman X sneaking about for his supper? On the contrary, wouldn't she, with her superior judgment and experience, having suffered under the matrimonial yoke herself (poor little Gates!), be the very person for adjusting the slight misunderstandings that will happen even in the best-regulated families? Why, she would be invaluable both above and below stairs! She by no means underrated her indispensability, and very logically expected that her son-in-law that was to be should appreciate it periodically and substantially.

When Mrs. Gates had finished her sentence about Arabella remaining on her hands, a voice cried, "Who are you?" and a piercing shriek followed. We trust our lady-readers are not nervous, for, although this voice and shriek proceeded from a biped, it was only a feathered one, a parrot—another appendage which her favoured son-in-law would have to welcome.

There was great sympathy between Mrs. Gates and her parrot: they had both strong voices, although the parrot's vocabulary was rather limited when compared with Mrs. Gates's; the parrot had fine feathers, and Mrs. Gates loved fine feathers; the parrot could shriek and scream, so could Mrs. Gates; it could call the cat and the chickens, and so could Mrs. Gates

loudly; it could bark like a dog, and so—no, we beg pardon, Mrs. Gates could *not* bark. When she went anywhere for any length of time the parrot travelled with her, it was such a pleasant companion in a railway carriage, the fellow-passengers were, as a rule, delighted with it, especially if there happened to be a baby crying in the same compartment—a disagreeable noise which the parrot would effectually counteract.

Frederick had not shown any particular civility or affection for Mrs. Gates's pet; on the contrary, he had on one occasion been heard to energetically anathematize the bird, but that was when he suddenly found it perched on his head, with its claws entangled in his hair. On another memorable occasion, Mrs. Gates came upon Frederick just as suddenly and unexpectedly as the parrot had done.

Frederick, finding himself one day alone with handsome Arabella, had been declaring his love in a very outspoken and earnest manner, when Mrs. Gates suddenly entered the room, rushed up to him, and threw her arms round his neck, declaring that it made her maternal heart leap for joy at her daughter's happiness; and that she herself should have him for a son-in-law. He was a cool person, and had been in several difficult situations, but never in all his life had he been so taken aback as at that moment. He had some of the instincts of a gentleman, and he had not the temerity to tell the mother that it was not with a view to matrimony he had been so warmly wooing her

daughter, and so between, on the one hand, the tearful, yet blissful smiles of Arabella, and, on the other, the loudly expressed felicitations of Mrs. Gates, he left the house an engaged man.

CHAPTER XI.

EMILY DANMER was dressed for Lady Plymptown's ball. Her brother, thanks to Lady Forrester's very kind offer, had been enabled to send her some beautiful flowers. Two or three days after Emily had written to him with regard to the dilemma she was in, he was but too glad to inform her that she need have no anxiety about flowers, for he would send her some that were rare and unsurpassable for beauty. She was delighted, for more reasons than one. She thought it very kind and considerate of Frederick to send her from the country just what she wanted. If she had cared to critically inquire into her brother's motives for this attention she would hardly have succeeded in finding out the truth, for, in judging of persons for whom we have affection, affection will always turn the scale in their favour.

Frederick took care to mention to Emily that he was indebted for the flowers to Lady Forrester. And Emily knew that her father was acquainted with Sir

Herbert, and that it would please him to hear that Frederick visited at Forrest Court.

Mrs. Danmer came into Emily's room, and said, "My dear Emily, I am ready. How very nice you look! Your papa is waiting in the drawing-room. He is very curious to see the style of dress you have chosen; and I, too, am anxious to have a critical look at you. Come, dear, we are late. I have left you to yourself as you requested, and now let me see the result. Here, Bridget," Mrs. Danmer said to the maid that had assisted Emily, "take these things and see them put into the carriage."

Mrs. Danmer and her daughter went downstairs, where they found the major standing before the fireplace, waiting. His tall and stately figure was drawn up to its full height as he stood on the hearth-rug, ready dressed, waiting for the entrance of his wife and daughter.

Mrs. Danmer entered first. Her appearance corresponded with her disposition. Amiability and trusting love were written in every line of her countenance. She was gentle in all her movements, and rather fragile-looking, without conveying the idea of having bad health. Her figure was below the middle height, and her dress suited her exactly—it was a pearl grey satin, partially covered with rich black lace. Her pale brown hair, which was here and there streaked with white, was turned back and confined with a band of black velvet fastened in front with a beautiful ruby ornament, from which, over the back of her

head, tastefully and becomingly disposed, fell a narrow scarf of Indian gauze, of rare manufacture and exquisite fineness, the ends of which partially covered her shoulders.

In sending the flowers to Emily, Frederick had not forgotten his mother. For her had been prepared a bouquet of flowers of the richest hues, amongst which the perfume of heliotrope was detectable. She held it in her hand with maternal love and pride, thinking of Frederick's thoughtful kindness in sending it to her. Altogether she looked a perfect picture of a sweet, lovable English matron.

And now entered Emily. We must describe her appearance, though we find ourselves quite inadequate to the task. For how shall we tell of the beautiful vision that glided into the room and stood before the delighted gaze of the major?

He was himself no mean judge of female beauty, for he had mixed much in the world and had seen it in all climes. He had expected to see Emily, perhaps, in a fashionably made blue dress—blue was her favourite colour—of suitable material, which would have accorded with her hair and complexion. At all events, in giving in to the whim of his wife and daughter as to keeping him in ignorance of the choice of Emily's dress until the evening of the ball, he had not feared any exhibition of bad taste; but he was not prepared for the effect her actual presence produced. Imagine Emily in her youthfulness, with her exquisite womanliness, her healthy shell-like complexion, her rich chestnut

brown hair, and her tender eyes raised appealingly to her father's face—for she felt, at the moment, as if she was concealing something from him. In looking at her, he forgot for a moment the dress altogether. In reality the dress contributed not a little to effect this forgetfulness, for, begging the poet's pardon, we do not believe that "loveliness is when unadorned adorned the most."

The soft Indian muslin, of which her dress was composed, fell in rich folds round her graceful figure, over an under skirt of rich white silk. Heaths and Japonicas looped up the outer skirt, while the short sleeves of old point lace, that showed her beautifully rounded arm, were fastened together by small bunches of similar flowers. Lace and silk seemed to compose the body of her dress, the front of which was adorned with flowers rare and magnificent, a light wreath of which also crowned her lovely head. From her neck, suspended by a narrow band of black velvet, hung a locket with a diamond star, which had been her mother's gift long before. This contrasted with her fair skin, and gave the one touch of brilliancy which lighted up her *tout ensemble*.

So entirely appropriate to the style and mood of her beauty was the simplicity of the Indian muslin and flowers and their arrangement, that one felt in looking at her that other types of beauty might be enhanced by gold and jewels, but not hers.

Major Danmer looked at her proudly and fondly for a moment, and then, detecting something peculiar in

her look, said, "Are you waiting for my approval? If so, you have it," kissing her on the forehead. "You are charming—perfect;" and not one word was said about the jewellery. From that moment Emily's spirits began to rise; she threw off her anxiety and prepared to really enjoy the ball.

During the drive she explained to her father that Frederick had sent her the flowers, which had come from the conservatory of Forrest Court, where he had been visiting, and Mrs. Danmer called his special attention to the bouquet which was sent for her.

"I like Sir Herbert Forrester," said the major. "I met him in Paris, you know. He is a fine, manly fellow, and I shall be glad to meet him again. I am also pleased that Fred has got into such a good set in the country."

By this time they had arrived near Plymptown House. The crowd of carriages before them brought them to a halt, and they could only move on by slow degrees. As usual, "the people" had collected in a crowd, in such convenient or inconvenient places as circumstances admitted, for the inspection of the "nobility and gentry," and their dresses, and so forth.

What will "the people" not do to see a sight for "nuffin"—especially boys? Some will lie for an hour and longer in the mud, with their heads under the canvas sheet of a tent, to get a peep at a circus inside, without succeeding in seeing much more than the heels of the boots of the spectators. They will climb to the top of any tree, any railing, or lamp-

post, and hold on for an incredibly long time, as if they were mesmerized and perfectly heedless as to the damage to which their unmentionables are necessarily exposed. On this occasion, also, the lamp-posts were monopolized by the boys. Some were perched on other high places—on the window-sill, for instance, and altogether appeared to be attached to the building outside, in an incomprehensible manner, like bats to a wall. They formed a select little gallery, while the *parterre* was rather mixed.

There was a good sprinkling of the fair sex, of all ages, some of the older dames being decidedly sturdy and unfeminine.

"There is a fine pair of horses," said a sweep.

We must here remark that "the people" have social privileges which those that fancy themselves "their betters" cannot indulge in with impunity, without running the risk of being snubbed. The people on public and other occasions always talk to the people without preliminary introduction, without having the honour or the pleasure of knowing each other, and they are much more successful in causing hilarity amongst their audience than their betters. Whether they are really more bent on jokes than the "nobility and gentry," or whether, in their sphere, the will is obligingly taken for the deed—that is, whether the crowd accepts anything for a joke that is meant for one—we cannot stop to investigate.

"There is a fine pair of horses," said the sweep.

"I believe you, my boy," said a journeyman baker; "they belongs to the Hearl of Staddington."

"That's all *you* know about it," said a butcher's boy. "You see that there bird on the carriage door; hearls 'ave no birds like that, they've got crowns."

By this time the butcher's boy felt that his back-door-acquired knowledge of "heridry" (which word we take to be a happy blending of "hereditary" and "heraldry") made him, or ought to have made him, an important personage in the eyes of the by-standers.

"I knows all about it," said he; "we serves the nobility—it's the merchants and big shop-keepers as have 'orses 'eads and harms with 'ammers on their carriage doors."

By this time the journeyman baker, who stood corrected, said—

"But what about them motters? You don't know what a motter is, do you? It's the big shop-keepers as have motters like 'Never say die!' and 'All's well that ends well.'"

Here, to the relief of the butcher's boy, whose study of "heridry" had not yet reached that complicated degree which involved "motters," and who had always taken the small words in little bands about the crowns for advertisements of the carriage makers (we all live, as regards one thing or another, under erroneous impressions), a little boy cried out from his perch—

"Hallow! big calves; ain't yer good-looking?" which set the audience in a roar of derision at the expense of a smart footman, who jumped off the box with the wonted agility of his class, and who, no doubt, thought well of his own appearance. The crowd were but too

glad to let him know that his airs were thrown away on *them*. They cannot put up with bloated *democrats*.

"Josie," said an elderly woman, who had a loaf of bread under her shawl and a soda-water bottle with gin in her pocket, to her daughter, "my stars! look at that joolry, and poor people starves."

"Ain't it a shame!" replied the daughter, mechanically, for she stood staring, with her mouth open, at the splendour of some of the ladies stepping out of the carriage.

"That's all them tories," said a tinker standing next to Josie's mother. "They takes the people's heart's blood, and thinks nothin' of it."

"But, my dear fellow," said rather a gentlemanly person, whose valour was greater than his discretion, "if that sort of people don't spend their money, you would say they want to keep it all to themselves."

The tinker scowled at him, and he immediately found, by the hustling and shoving to which he was directly afterwards treated, that he was dangerously in the minority, and very prudently skedaddled.

We have purposely abstained from transmitting to our readers the most highly relished jokes that passed; the ladies and gentlemen stepping out of their carriages did not hear them, and if we, as faithful observers, were compelled to listen to them—well, that is not a reason why we should chronicle them for our readers.

We must mention, to the honour of "the force," that they were, as they usually are on such occasions,

thoroughly good-natured, and interfered as little as possible with the amusement of the "ladies and gentlemen of the *pavé*."

The Earl of Plymptown was a middle-aged peer of great wealth, but who had never until lately done anything to particularly distinguish himself. He had been content to rest his fame on the superior quality of his south-downs and irreproachable turnips. He was in every sense of the word a respectable man. For more than twenty years he had enjoyed his title and estates, and had pursued the even tenor of his way, hunting moderately in the season, giving excellent, but somewhat ponderous dinners to his country neighbours, killing a proper quantity of pheasants, attending to his justice business and agricultural meetings, and very rarely going up to London. When he did, it was to see some new advertised plough or other implement of husbandry, and his chief object when there was to get home again as soon as possible.

On one of these rare visits to London—surely the merry, blind imp, who plays such tricks with the fate of mankind, must laugh at the sudden manner in which the most settled habits and plans of staid, grave men are upset by a touch of his arrow—it so chanced that, calling on an old friend, who had been living abroad for a number of years, he was introduced to that friend's daughter. Time had passed so evenly with Lord Plymptown in the country that he felt at first incredulous of the fact that his friend could have a daughter grown up. At all events, from the moment

he saw her his fate was sealed: he fell, for the first time in his life, violently and irremediably in love.

So well did he plead his cause, both with father and daughter, that in a very short time he was transformed from the plodding sheep farmer on a large scale, to a fashionable man about town, with a charming, *distinguée* wife, a magnificent house in Belgravia, a box at the opera, and a host of friends. This ball was the first given by them since their marriage in return for the numerous entertainments that had been made for them.

The entrance hall of Plymptown House, which was, of course, the first object that attracted the attention of visitors, was fitted up as a conservatory—that is, tall palms were placed near the walls and between them were statues, holding in their hands brilliant lights. Flowers of rich and varied hues were interspersed, and the broad staircase was lined on each side with choice hot-house plants.

Emily, her mother and father, were received by Lord and Lady Plymptown just inside the first drawing-room. A number of guests had already arrived, and more continued to arrive, and the whole scene was brilliant and beautiful.

Lady Plymptown was about twenty-four, eminently graceful, not particularly handsome, but intellectual and *spirituelle*-looking. She had a pale, creamy complexion, black hair, and dark eyes. She was dressed in pink satin, almost covered with exquisitely beautiful Honiton lace, the softness and richness of which threw

an indescribable charm over her complexion and whole appearance. Diamonds sparkled in her hair and on her neck and arms. Lord Plymptown stood by her side, one of the happiest men in her Majesty's dominions, and looking it.

The whole scene presented something removed from ordinary everyday life, however refined or elegant. Lofty palatial rooms, inspiriting music, brilliant light, beautiful women, magnificent dresses, exquisite flowers—each contributed to produce a scene of almost fairylike beauty.

Emily, although not vain, could not help—surrounded as she was on all sides by mirrors—being aware that, among many fair and lovely women, she was one of the fairest. The major saw it, too; so did many others. How beautiful she looked! Everything combined to make her the cynosure of many eyes: her dress, her hair, her complexion, her figure, her movements. Altogether there was that subtle something, that fascination about her, which is a more powerful attraction than even beauty.

Major Danmer knew a great many gentlemen in the room, who were not slow in requesting him for an introduction to his daughter, and Emily had very soon several names inscribed on her tablets.

Sir Herbert Forrester, who was rather late, came into the room when Emily was waltzing, and he at once was attracted by her appearance. He looked the picture of health and manliness; his fine figure, regular features, and clear complexion showed to great advantage in the brilliant light of the ball-room.

There are not many countries where you can see so many well-grown, handsome-featured, unanxious-looking men as in England. If this is generally the case, no wonder that Lady Plymptown's ball-room held that evening numbers of men of *distingué* appearance, both in a physical and intellectual sense.

Sir Herbert was not one of those who, in a crowd, run the danger of being overlooked. Of a decided Saxon type, still his imposing appearance, his frank, fearless expression, based upon a well-balanced mind and the absence of worldly cares, rendered classification with so many more of his type impossible. No one would pass him without being struck by his individuality, and no one having an opportunity would let it pass without asking "Who is this?"

When the waltz was finished, Lady Plymptown happened to be very near to Emily. Sir Herbert, approaching her, addressed her, saying—

"Who is that lovely girl, Lady Plymptown?"

"Which?"

"In white and natural flowers."

"Oh, that is Miss Danmer," replied Lady Plymptown, "the daughter of Major Danmer. Isn't she pretty?"

Lady Plymptown looked at Sir Herbert with that irrepressible feminine curiosity which is almost always uppermost in the minds of women when an interesting individual of the other sex shows any concern in one of their own.

At the mention of Major Danmer's name, Lady

Plymptown's question concerning Emily's prettiness must have escaped Sir Herbert, for he left it unanswered by asking—

“Major Danmer? Is he here?”

“Both the major and Mrs. Danmer are here. Shall I introduce you to the daughter?”

“I shall be delighted,” said Sir Herbert, offering his arm to Lady Plymptown, who walked with him towards Emily.

“I must try to see the major presently and have a chat with him,” remarked Sir Herbert. “I met him in Paris, and I have reason to be very much obliged to him.”

“Indeed!” ejaculated Lady Plymptown, desirous of hearing more on that subject. But by this time they had come up to where Emily was standing.

“Emily, my dear, allow me to introduce Sir Herbert Forrester, who is a particular friend of ours.”

So saying, Lady Plymptown left the handsome pair to themselves. Under any circumstances, her presence was required in so many places, and her attention had to be divided amongst such a number of guests, that she could not well bestow much time on any one in particular.

When Sir Herbert was introduced to her, Emily blushed, which little fact did not escape him.

We have reason to believe that there were some young ladies to whom Sir Herbert was introduced before, who also blushed, but he did not notice it. There was a group of reasons that presented itself to

Emily's mind when she heard the name of Sir Herbert Forrester, which accounted for her blushing.

"I am very fortunate, Miss Danmer, in meeting you," said Sir Herbert.

"Papa has often spoken of you," said Emily, smilingly.

"Are you engaged for the next dance?" asked Sir Herbert.

"Yes, I think I am," replied Emily, looking over her tablets. "These are the only two for which I am not engaged," she said, handing the tablets to Sir Herbert, who asked—

"May I put down my name for this quadrille?"

"With pleasure," said Emily. "Really, mamma and I have to thank Lady Forrester very much for the very beautiful flowers which she had the kindness to send to us through Frederick."

"My mother was but too glad of the opportunity," said Sir Herbert. "She is looking forward to calling on Mrs. Danmer the first time she comes to town."

"I am sure papa and mamma will be delighted to make Lady Forrester's acquaintance."

By this time the speakers had had an opportunity of observing each other, which they did with more than ordinary interest, and Sir Herbert felt the existence of a *rapprochement* between him and the young lady which was not unlikely to influence his future.

"What a charming scene this ball-room presents!" said he: "the ladies look very happy."

"Everybody seems to be happy to-night—everything harmonizes so perfectly," replied Emily.

"London society is plunged just now into a sea of gaieties. In the country we are very quiet."

"No doubt," replied Emily to this remark of Sir Herbert's; "the country offers more leisure."

"Oh, we have plenty to do in the country," said he, smiling. "I like London, but still I like the country better; there is——"

Here Emily's partner approached and took her away to join the dance, cutting short Sir Herbert's sentence concerning his preference for country life. As it is not probable that he will finish it at his next conversation with Emily, for people are not in the habit of taking up the thread of their casual remarks, we will do it for him. We will do more than that—we will tell our readers exactly what he thought, not what he would have said.

He thought that he was a more important person in the country than in town, and he was going to expatiate on the disadvantages of centralization, unconscious no doubt that he himself in this instance was the centre of his reflections. Sir Herbert was no snob, who thinks he must carry his house on his back like a snail, to let the world know that he has a property; but we must confess that it is difficult for a man of Sir Herbert's surroundings and belongings to underrate their value at such an interesting moment, when the *rapport* that made itself perceptible within him concerning Emily urged him to bring up all his forces, like a good general, who has more confidence in numbers than in strategy.

In love, as in war, everything is fair, and if a poor knight feels that he is wooing under a disadvantage because he is castleless, why should he, whom fortune has favoured with *châteaux* and fair domains, not give them due importance? They must play as important a part in winning the hearts of "ye fair ladyes" of the nineteenth century as they did in the olden time, or else so many miserable wights would not hold out to their loves mere *châteaux en Espagne* for want of more substantial homes.

Sir Herbert went through the ball-room in search of Major Danmer. After a good deal of looking about he found him.

"My dear Sir Herbert," said the major, "I am very glad to see you. Have you been long in town?"

"Only came up this morning," replied Sir Herbert.

"Do you intend to stay any time?" asked the major.

"Only a day or two," answered Sir Herbert; and then the conversation turned on Emily and Frederick.

The major was quite pleased that Sir Herbert had already been introduced to his daughter by Lady Plymptown, and also that Sir Herbert spoke so highly of Frederick, whom he found Lady Forrester had quite taken under her protection. Sir Herbert said he intended to call upon the major and Mrs. Danmer before he left, and his mother would do so shortly, when in town.

The major conducted Sir Herbert to Mrs. Danmer.

"My dear," he said, "allow me to introduce to you

my old young friend, Sir Herbert Forrester. He is no stranger to you."

"Oh no," replied Mrs. Danmer, "I have known Sir Herbert Forrester a long time"—holding out her hand to him cordially.

All three walked through the rooms, sympathetically feeling that their steps were directed towards the spot where Emily was. Sir Herbert was anxious not to be far away from her, lest he should miss the moment when it would be his privilege to dance with her. Emily's loveliness had, more than once this evening, attracted her mother's fond looks.

Sir Herbert took Emily to supper, and the conversation again recurred, if not to town and country life, at least to the country.

Emily had lived almost always near London, and had seen very little of the country. She loved rural life, its simplicity (?) and repose. The quiet summer sunset which enveloped the tops of the trees in a warm glowing golden light, the chorus of birds in their own free domain, the hum of the myriads of insects that fills the summer air with a music of its own,—all was more in accordance with her sweet serenity of mind than the noise and glare of London life.

Sir Herbert made up his mind that Emily should see Forrest Court through an invitation from his mother to Major and Mrs. Danmer and herself.

The supper was a very pleasant interlude, worthy of the whole evening's entertainment.

CHAPTER XII.

"CHARLEY, make haste!" said the mistress of the Philadelphia Hotel to a faded-looking waiter dressed in—but we need not say how he was dressed, for everybody knows how a waiter is dressed. Still, as it pays better to write what everybody knows than to advance what nobody does, and as there is also one half of the world which does not know how the other half lives, we had, perhaps, better describe Charley's dress, the waiter at the "Philadelphia."

But first, as to his person and manners—or rather manner, for he had only one manner, which was that of alert civility to everybody alike.

We said he looked faded. He was a young man, say twenty-six. He had light hair, well oiled, which he parted down the middle on the back of his head; but, out of a certain deferential feeling towards many of his customers, he did not like to part it in the middle in front. It would not do, he felt, to adopt, as a serving man, a distinction of which his customers

were proud; at least, not in a monarchical country like this.

It is all very well to be equal in a republic, where the dignity of man cannot stand the epithet "waiter" from his fellow man.

Charley was a faded individual, from the top of his head to the tip of his boots, inside and outside. His brain was faded, his heart, his dress coat, his waistcoat, his trousers; the only things that were not faded were his choker, his shirt front, and his patent leather boots. There is such a difference between linen that will do and linen put on quite fresh. Charley in that particular was faultless, his boots were a mirror of brightness, and his footsteps were as noiseless as those of a cat.

He laboured under many disadvantages: he never knew what fresh air was; he did not know it even by hearsay; his attention was only called to it in print, under the photographs and in the descriptions of new hotels in watering-places (some of which hung in the hall of the hotel), which spoke of the bracing air. And, indeed, bracing air would have been something invaluable in Charley's hotel.

It is not only a political party that requires education, it is also man's nose. Now Charley's nose was not educated. Fortunately for him, his olfactory nerves were not sensitive to the mustiness in the establishment.

As fadiness was the characteristic of Charley, so mustiness was that of the Philadelphia Hotel; if

there were places or rooms in the hotel that were a little less musty, there were others again that made fully up for that deficiency.

How Charley could stand the wear and tear so long without a change of air and scene, is beyond our comprehension. He was a fixture in the hotel, like the gas-chandelier which conveyed the stuff that contributed, as the mustiness and a few other wrong ingredients, so much towards Charley's general fadiness. As there was no stain on Charley's dress suit, so there was none on his character: he never overslept himself, he never made a mistake in the reckoning, he never looked through the keyholes to see what equivocal guests were doing, nor did he avail himself of the remnants of drinkables which customers left, or of a few other opportunities for indulging on the "sly;" he was perfectly honourable, trustworthy, and obliging. He was only wrong in two things, but those were things that many people praise in man—they were, that he allowed himself to be overworked, and lived by and for fees alone. We don't mean to say that he did not eat and drink, to sustain the outer man, at the expense of his employer; but still, he swallowed fees—they made up his spiritual life. His faded mind had become a feeometer, for he knew the denizens of his world only by measuring them by the respective fees they gave.

The Philadelphia, in spite of the mustiness, which was caused in a measure by the closeness of the situation, was a very comfortable hotel, and one that

paid. The spirits, wines, and ales were noted as good, and the cooking of certain dishes was always to be relied on.

There is nothing like honesty. We do not say this satirically, like the fool who thought that honesty lasted longest, because it was least in use.

But the goodness of the articles sold was not the only reason why the hotel paid. There was a mistress in the house, one that knew her business and liked it and its results. The hotel itself was not so large as to require deputy-mistresses. It is true this is the age of limited liability companies. Physical monsters and mammoths have disappeared, but social, political, and commercial combinations on a mammoth scale have taken their place. For monster enterprises systems have been invented, as announced in the prospectuses, that will do anything and everything.

Charley, in respect to his balance-sheet, was even more favoured than his mistress. When he made up his accounts of an evening, he had always a surplus in his pocket. Fancy, dear reader, what it is to have always a surplus in your pocket every evening—when companies, limited and unlimited, not to mention countless individuals, have only a surplus on paper! Financially, Charley was fortune's darling pet, with his profits in his pocket and the claims upon him *nil*. He paid no house rent and no wages. As to his eatables and drinkables, we have already alluded to their inexpensiveness to him. His dress suit was everlasting; as to hats, we think we are justified in

saying that he had none. He paid no income-tax, no poor-rates, no assessed taxes. Ah! now we know why bracing air, and the song of the birds, and the roar of the sea, and the perfume of the flowers, and the babbling of the streamlet, and the lowing of the cattle, and the blue sky, and the freedom of the downs and the commons, have no charm for him like his state of fadiness and mustiness: it was his flourishing financial position.

When he took the newspaper up, which he never did without being called "Charley!" or "Waiter!" directly after, the money market or the share list could not disquiet him.

"Charley make haste!"

"All right," said Charley, who was then carrying a big, heavy tray, which seemed to bend his legs like broken reeds, although he managed the weight on one arm, on the flat of his hand, the lower part of the arm turned upwards, which gave him the other arm and hand free, and therefore enabled him to touch the chin of one of the chambermaids he met on the stairs, by way of evincing his appreciation of some of the beauties of nature, however regardless he may have been as to nature's beauties outside the Philadelphia. He cleared the best drawing-room of little trays and glasses and ladles and jugs, and gave the fire new life by filling up the grate.

There had been a committee meeting of some sort in the best drawing-room, nearly up to the very hour for which Mr. Egremont Carlton had engaged it for his

party. But everything was put to rights and made comfortable and clean in a remarkably short time, as if no committee had sat there, and as if the room had never seen anything stronger than water. The cheerful coal fire even modified the prevailing mustiness.

Mr. Egremont Carlton was the first to make his appearance.

"Well, Charley," he said cheerfully, "everything all right?"

"All right, sir," said Charley, helping him to take off his light overcoat, which he took on his arm, and showed him into the drawing-room. He also took Mr. Carlton's hat and umbrella, saying, "I'll put them in a safe place, sir."

"Oh, I see," said Carlton, "you have got it all right; there are the wines and liqueurs on the side-board. You know, Charley, about nine o'clock or so, we will have some coffee and tea handed round to the ladies, and after twelve we'll have supper."

"Yes, sir," said Charley.

Soon after Carlton, arrived Mr. Peter Styles, the son-in-law of Mrs. Gates, and her married daughter, his wife.

Mr. Peter Styles was a comedian, as we mentioned before, but now he looked as if the light-hearted sister Thalia, the muse of comedy, never accompanied him off the stage.

Life was to him no comedy—fate had allotted to him a tough, practical struggle for the means of

subsistence for himself and his family. He would have given much if he could have looked as cheerful and as rosy as an undertaker. But an undertaker's business is far preferable to that of a struggling comedian. It is much easier with a light heart, when you are well paid for it, to look solemn, than with a heavy heart and inefficient salary to be funny. The comedian has to grin and bear it; the undertaker rather bears it and grins. The comedian has to put on a hundred different faces; the undertaker, when he doesn't grin, has only one face, to which he adds more solemnity according as so many more horses, and better and higher feathers on hearse and horses, and more "mourners," are ordered.

Mr. Styles looked like what he was in character—a serious, practical, anxious man; he would have made a capital business man. He was thought to be very near in his expenditure, but we are far from reproaching him with his meanness, for those who found fault with him knew nothing of the practice of legitimate economy.

His social qualification consisted in very sensible, serious conversation, and when he was very hard pressed he would sing a comic song. His wife, Arabella's elder sister, was a plain-looking woman, sensible, practical, economical, like her husband. She had an engagement at the same theatre as her husband, but on the stage she was never married to him: she was either an old servant of his or some old matron, or played some other thankless part

which caused the audience to laugh *at* her while they laughed *with* her husband. Still the performing of her part required just as much art as any, and was done justice to by her.

Then came Mr. William Sherry, the popular comedian of the day, a handsome, dashing fellow, who carried, or thought he carried, everything before him. One might have taken him for an officer in the Guards, to look at him. But still there was a difference—he had a little too much of the “haw-haw” spirit. The poets who wrote comedies before he was known were hardly good enough for him—at all events, he did not care to adapt himself to their creations, but had characters written by modern geniuses adapted to him. This was far more convenient to him, and much more telling with an appreciating public. He could play “off the reel” the same character for a hundred, nay, for three hundred and sixty-five consecutive nights—Sundays excepted—without any extra study whatever. His artistic soul was satisfied with playing one character to perfection, at least for a time—for a long time. He was perfectly right.

There are many people who can do nothing well; therefore, if a man does one thing well to perfection, to the satisfaction of himself and to the rest of the world, why should he not stick to it as long as circumstances will let him? Socially, he was a very nice fellow; he was by no means near, like Styles; besides, he was a bachelor—but the society that sought him

had to be pretty careful in not letting him feel the actor.

When Styles was asked to sing a comic song, and did so reluctantly, it was because it reminded him too much of his uncongenial avocation.

Mr. William Sherry was sore on the subject of comic songs in society for quite a different reason. How could society dare to invite him only to sing, or perhaps to be funny? He could be exceedingly rude to people who presumed on his art in this way. He was known to have got up and walked out of the room *sans ceremonie*, to leave the company to their well-merited consternation. Yet he was not a snob. He was never overbearing to any one that he considered socially below him. Still he could not bear any one above him.

A hansom stopped at the hotel, and out jumped Tudor and Hugh Neilson, happy, good-looking, well-dressed young men, who had all the world before them, which expression is generally used as if everything before us were sunshine. The cabman, as usual, pertinaciously demanded sixpence more than his fare, which was granted to him, for the usual reason that the "row" was more disagreeable than the paying of an additional sixpence. So the little crowd, which had already collected before the entrance of the hotel, dispersed, owing to a premature fall of the curtain, which put an end to the street scene. Charley showed the two young friends upstairs.

Then came Arabella and her mother, in a four-

wheeler. Strange to say, Mrs. Gates's cabman did not overcharge her, and, stranger still, he touched his hat and thanked his fare civilly for just his due. The reason of this strange behaviour on cabby's part, we have not been able to ascertain. We may conjecture that he had driven Mrs. Gates before. The party was not to be a large one; still, there were more guests expected.

Miss Adelina Baker was rather late. At last her brougham drew up. She was a stately, portly lady, who had the indiscretion to advertise to the world that she thought her beauty on the wane. This she contrived by an over-elaboration about her person and dress. Jewellery, satin, lace, rouge, cosmetics, perfume, were all so profusely and obtrusively evident about her, that one wondered at her modesty, at the humble sense she had of her own attractions. The philosopher was, perhaps, tempted on that account to fall in love with her; but Miss Adelina Baker was not the sort of person that a philosopher could fascinate—except a rich philosopher, rich in worldly goods and willing to spend them on her. It was whispered that everything about her, except the rouge, the cosmetics, and the huge straw-coloured chignon, was a present made to her in some shape or other. She sang in concerts, and acquitted herself well. She was never a theatrical star, only a shining star of female beauty. She was fair, fully developed, blue-eyed and white-teethed. She loved good champagne and everything else that was good. As regards

conversation, she was in her element when the *faux-pas* of some "sister" in high life was on the tapis.

Frederick Danmer arrived next. He was late too, but he walked all the way for reasons of economy.

Among the party there was also Mr. Robert Harkhins, the lecturer, author, and wit. We do not know whether we are right in styling Mr. Harkhins a wit. Perhaps that term is too comprehensive an appellation when used with reference to this great man. We might, no doubt, classify him under the head of "tall talkers or jokers." Everything about him was tall, but his jokes were the tallest. His forehead was perhaps the least tall thing about him. His mouth, his ears, his feet, his hands, were tall; his comparisons were tall; his anecdotes were tall; his reformatory benevolence was tall. There was also a tall difference between his passing jokes upon the world, and the world passing them upon him. The former paid and pleased him, the latter injured his business and displeased him. In a social party like this, however, he was a very agreeable companion, provided you did not try his listening powers too much.

There were some other ladies and gentlemen forming part of this evening's social gathering, the fair sex belonging also to the theatrical world, while the men were the artists' friends, like Tudor, Neilson, and Danmer. There was a wine merchant and an attorney amongst them.

The evening was a most agreeable and genial one. There was some very good music. All and every one

contributed cheerfully to the entertainment. Styles sang a comic song because he was asked, and Sherry because he was not asked; Carlton sang, and Arabella, and Miss Baker.

Tea and coffee, and wine and liqueurs were enjoyed in moderation before supper-time. On the whole, there was a spirit pervading the party which the Neilsons could not have conjured up, in their gilt-corniced abode, not with double their income, much as money will do. Of all the persons present, none felt uncomfortable but Frederick. He was really glad to see handsome, vivacious Arabella, and her devotedly tender looks were not thrown away upon him; but irrespective of his own harassing feelings indissolubly connected with his pecuniary difficulties, Mrs. Gates's conduct disgusted him.

"Fred!" she would cry out, "come here and turn the leaves for Bella, while she plays this piece! Don't you break my daughter's heart by flirting with other ladies!" "Mr. Sherry, allow me to introduce to you Mr. Frederick Danmer, my future son-in-law, an officer in the army!" This, "an officer in the army," was said with great unction, while Frederick, thinking of the major, felt like one pierced through the heart with a sharp instrument, and Peter Styles looked at his future brother-in-law with an undefined feeling of uncongenial relationship.

Then, again, Mrs. Gates would be provokingly familiar with "Fred," by patting his back and putting her arm round him, for fun, saying she hoped "Bella

wouldn't be jealous of her, an old woman as she was." Finally, just about an hour or so before supper, Frederick felt greatly relieved from the annoyance by a rubber of whist being proposed between some of the gentlemen; and Mr. Harkhins and Tudor, and Frederick and Neilson, played against each other respectively. At another table were Sherry and Carlton, against two other gentlemen. Mr. Peter Styles did not join them, but kept, wisely, with some others of the party just as wise as himself, in the corner whither the ladies had cosily retired. To look at Frederick's face, after he had played for a little while, one would have thought that he had fallen from Scylla into Charybdis, or, in other words, from the frying-pan into the fire. He looked gloomy and tired. It never entered Tudor's nor Hugh's mind to play for anything but a nominal stake. But Sherry and Carlton were in the habit of playing for more than sixpenny points, and Harkhins thought the game dull with low stakes, so they played guinea points.

From time immemorial it has been observed that fortune scourges those upon whom Cupid smiles, and what more natural than that Danmer, in presence of his lady-love, should lose several sovereigns!

Supper-time arrived, and on giving up whist Neilson paid Harkhins, but Tudor had to be satisfied with an apology and a promise on the part of Frederick. Carlton had specially introduced him to his two young friends, Thompson and Neilson, in the beginning of

the evening, and Frederick and Tudor had had a long conversation together before they began to play at cards.

"Thompson, my dear fellow," said Frederick, in that familiar way which young men often adopt towards each other, even on a slight acquaintance, "I really am very sorry, but I haven't a penny in my pocket. I must have left my money on the mantel-piece in changing my dress."

"Oh," said Tudor, "don't mention it; that's all right—it does not matter at all."

"But I cannot allow this. Give me your address, and I will send a cheque to you."

Tudor felt that where a gentleman insists upon anything that ranged within the *point d'honneur* category, it would not do for him to ignore it. He, therefore, took out a card, wrote down his address, and gave it to Frederick.

Then Mrs. Gates approached, and taking Frederick by the arm, said, "You are a nice swain! Come, take us to supper."

So the son-in-law elect took Arabella and her mother to supper, while some had just gone before them, and others followed.

Every face, even Danmer's, had that agreeable expression which immediately precedes the enjoyment of the good things of this world, the creature comforts, which so many of us affect to despise. Carlton was rubbing his hands as if he felt cold and meant to create warmth inside with a will. Mr. William Sherry

had already helped himself to a preliminary glass of wine by way of a stimulant.

The supper was "the crowning of the edifice." It was a gem in its way. It was neat, not gaudy. There was no ostentatious, or, as brother Jonathan hath it, no "upper ten thousand" display or stiffness. There was no profuse waste; still, there was everything that would be desired, and Miss Adelina Baker found the champagne excellent.

After the ladies had been helped to the good things, each according to her taste, and the gentlemen too were provided for, and a reasonable time had elapsed for the first and most vigorous onslaught, and more than one glass of champagne had been poured out to each of the guests, the atmosphere of conviviality gained in warmth.

Mr. Sherry filled his glass, got up, and said, "Ladies and gentlemen,—Unaccustomed to public speaking"—which was uttered with inimitable gravity and caused corresponding hilarity—"unaccustomed to public speaking, you will excuse me if I fail to express, in adequate terms, the unspeakable gratitude that exists in my bosom towards my colleague, Mr. Egremont Carlton, for having prepared, combined, secured, and furnished everything connected with this intellectual and artistic feast, the pleasures of which he has taken care substantially to enhance by a plentiful supply of those universally esteemed delicacies, chickens and oysters, not to mention many and various other tempting dishes, of which I trust we have all

given practical proof of our appreciation. But I will let the chickens rest in peace, and I will leave untold a thrilling anecdote connected with lobster salad which I am strongly tempted to tell you."

Here Mr. Harkhins grew more attentive, and looked nettled.

Mr. Sherry very artistically kept his audience in suspense as to the story of the lobster, and continued—"Where was I?—oh, oysters! Speaking of oysters, I can never mention the name of that patient, useful, delicious, nutritious, sociable animal without regretting that my youthful, compulsory education days were spent by me with such a culpable want of attention to natural history. My dear friend and colleague"—here Mr. Sherry presented arms with his glass,—“let me drink a preliminary grateful sip to your worthy self, in which I trust both the tender and sterner sex here present will join.

“Had not my education in natural history been so sadly neglected, I might—who knows?—in these days, when science bids fair to become a substitute for creation”—here Mr. Harkhins appeared again annoyed, for he looked upon the word “creation” as if it were patented by him, one of his stock words,—“I might, I say, have hit upon some device for producing this world-famed esculent *ad infinitum*, and to have been the humble instrument of administering comfort to innumerable *matersfamilias* residing in and about the city of London, whose lords and masters cannot bring home the much-needed silver coins, because oysters

are scarce and dear. Think what dreadful consequences would follow an oyster famine in the city! How many epicures would gnash their teeth lunchless and supperless! How certain drinkables, which the oyster-eater loves and believes to be their natural element in their shelled state, would remain unconsumed!

“The oyster is patient, but, like most patient creatures, is obstinate and stubbornly fastidious: it refuses to go down without being washed down, and nothing will suit its taste but stout, sauterne, hock, chablis, or champagne. Had I the gift of poesy I would immortalize it. But you know, ladies and gentlemen, that to call it ‘it’ in a poem, would be fatal to me as a poet. When I take into consideration that it is men who are so passionate in their devotion at the oyster shrine, I am inclined to invoke the oyster as ‘she.’ On the other hand”—here Mr. Sherry gallantly bowed to the ladies,—“when I observe that the male sex only are ‘obstinate brutes’—“Hear, hear,” from several voices,—“I should say the pronoun ‘he’ was most correct. I have been seriously thinking of requesting the Imperial Scientific Society to enlighten me on the subject of his, her, or its origin, whether foreign or British. But when I considered how much business that society has on hand, and how scarce their decisions are, I thought whether I could not solve this question myself, and, after much cogitation, I came to the conclusion that the oyster must be of British origin, for could any foreign creature obstinately insist upon

being 'washed down'? In my scientific researches in *Punch*, reaching as far back as the time of the first Exhibition, I find that the wash-hand basin was at that time unknown amongst a nation which, centuries ago, furnished us with our aristocracy. How could the oyster, in the face of this historical record, be foreign? —the oyster, whose ancestors must always have been civilized, for they never were found without houses or beds, and, although their beds might have been sold from under them, their houses were never mortgaged. Ladies and gentlemen, I drink the health of the oyster, coupled with the name of our hospitable and generous friend, Mr. Egremont Carlton."

That gentleman rose to respond amid great applause.

"Ladies and gentlemen, when I look at my feeble efforts to please you this night, and which I trust you will accept as a token of my appreciation of the great consideration and hospitality I have enjoyed at the hands of almost all of you, I hardly think that I am adequate to the task of responding to my worthy colleague's toast concerning his muse, the oyster. Considering, however, how much indebted all of us are, whose professional careers require little suppers, to the oyster, my friend, Mr. Sherry, could not have coupled my name with a more appropriate and prized necessary of life, and I believe I express the feelings of all artists when I say that we will never cease, as long as he, she, or it lives, to patronize the oyster, as it deserves. Still, there are dear creatures, more patient, less obstinate, less expensive, more eagerly

sought for by men, more necessary, less stubbornly fastidious, of older ancestry—at least as far as record goes,—and involving less perplexing scientific problems than the oyster, namely, the ladies. The ladies ! When I think of these treasures, my heart overflows and my brain is submerged. If a man had lost us paradise, it would be dreadful ; but as it was woman, lovely woman, who can be angry ? Perhaps the consciousness in women that they have deprived us of so desirable a patrimony as paradise must have been, is the reason why they are such angels now !

“ Suppose it had been the other way ?—suppose we had lost woman and kept paradise ? I, for one, prefer the way it is ”—“ Hear, hear,” and “ Bravo ! bravo ! ” on the part of the younger male generation, while the staid, more quiet married men remained undemonstrative. Here Mr. Carlton bowed several times to the ladies on both sides of the table, filled his glass, put on his pleasantest smile—in the gas-light he looked quite handsome—and said, “ To the ladies ! ”

He had hardly sat down when Mr. Harkhins rose, and surveying his audience in that professional manner, which, through his lecturing, had become habitual to him, and enabled him pretty accurately to guess at the number of three shillings, two shillings, one shillings, and sixpences present, coughed, and spoke as follows :—

“ Ladies and gentlemen, it is with considerable, with mighty diffidence that I rise to respond to a toast which I could not do justice to if I had a mouth

as wide as the Atlantic and a tongue as long as the Mississippi. If I were autocrat of the universe, which requires thorough reform, I would allot to the ladies those spheres of action to which their splendidly superior attributes undoubtedly entitle them.

“From my close observations, which principally my professional career as an author and a lecturer have enabled me to institute, I never met with an assembly of pure men—I mean of men assembled without the admixture of the feminine element—who did not make egregious fools of themselves.

“Look at men asserting that the earth is nothing but a colossal ball of fire, with a thin crust, which will collapse in three years fifteen days six hours two minutes and a second from the date of their meeting, like a balloon with a hole in it! Do you think, ladies and gentlemen, that in any assembly, even with a sprinkling of ladies present, any man would venture to advance such a theory? I guess not. I think he would prefer to hide himself near the source of the Nile, which I reckon a pretty safe place of retreat, even if he were pitched on a rocky shore from which he had to dip into the Lake Tanganyika, for want of other more handy and more compound drinkables, and had to eat his daily bread at the point of a pitchfork, rather than expose himself to the possible common-sense retort from one of the feminine hearers—‘What do you know about the crust of this earth and the fire inside it, when you would be puzzled to regulate the fire in a kitchen range for the proper rise of the crust of a pumpkin pie?’

“Rather than run the gauntlet of the sensible remarks of the ladies”—here Mr. Harkhins made a tall bow,—“scientific men would prefer to jump on a comet’s tail and ride through creation, heedless of the tremendous fall which awaits them, which is sure to happen when the comet fulfils its mission of knocking some used-up planet into smithereens. And other men trying to frighten the weak and credulous by lecturing that we are in danger of being eaten up by insects! Couldn’t the ladies tell them that there is more vermin-powder for sale in the grocers’ shops than there are beetles in the universe? Where are these men’s eyes? Are they so monopolized in viewing their own pretensions that the vermin-killer placards have escaped their notice? If so, it is certainly not for want of conspicuity, for the merchant in the vermin-killing line has taken good care that an insect of very moderate size according to natural history, should be as big as a crab that would fetch at least three shillings at Billingsgate.

“Though I flatter myself that I am no stranger to you, notwithstanding that this is my first appearance in your circle, I took upon myself, as a bachelor, to return thanks for the ladies. I say as a bachelor who”—here the ladies who were neither engaged nor married, and their mothers present, grew more attentive—“has made up his mind to—to walk the rough and thorny paths of this vale of tears”—great attention—“alone”—great disappointment,—“without exposing to harm the lovely, tender, darling feet”—some young

ladies looked rather contemptuous—"of any feminine creature. Nobody knows better the disadvantages to which my isolation has condemned me.

"There is not a man that has a profounder knowledge of human nature, although I say it who shouldn't, than I have. In my work, 'New Jericho,' I have boldly denounced the monstrous notions which men say deter them from entering the blessed state of matrimony. I say 'they say,' for how can they indulge their oyster-eating propensities, to which both my friends, Mr. Carlton and Mr. Sherry, have alluded, and advance, with any shadow of logic, that they can't marry because bread is so dear? No, ladies and gentlemen, this generation requires gigantic, reformative convulsions, that will knock the clay-footed sophistry of selfish bachelors on the head, and bury it in such swamps as they now morally wade through, unwedded."—"Hear, hear," from the married men, while bachelordom kept quiet in its turn.

"As regards myself, I am wedded to the cause of the ladies. I consider it my mission. I say, most emphatically, that it is a shame that men refuse to marry on the plea that the penny loaves of to-day look no bigger than ha'penny ones did at the time of their grandmothers.

"Shame upon a generation of men, that allow adorable, angelic, ministering, lovely womanhood to degenerate into sighing, pedantic, acrimonious, yellow-skinned spinsterhood, on no better grounds than the small size of penny buns! Can't they trust to some-

thing higher for support? Why, if all the stars of the firmament, the milky way included, were ha'penny buns, and stored up by the men, would it enable them to marry the sooner? Wouldn't they get musty?—I mean the buns. Wouldn't the mice eat them? Or are they, perhaps, afraid that their life would be all buns and no oysters? Mean, contemptible suspicion! If I had the means I would buy up all the rigging of all the navies of the world, and make a scourge that would lick every such bachelor to the other side of Jordan."

Here Mr. Harkhins dropped his tall figure into his chair, amidst general applause and hilarity.

By this time the company looked very rosy, especially the ladies. Didst thou ever know a lady, reader, that did not like champagne? We never did.

It is the ladies' wine *par excellence*. Cupid may pour it out blindfold, and have the pleasure of hearing it fizz: its volatility forms such a charming contrast to the constancy of the feminine heart. We trust our lady readers do not for one moment imagine that we speak ironically. Inconstancy, thy name is *man*.

Champagne does not admit of that ponderosity which is so uncongenial to the fair sex. Their quick, impulsive nature cares not for sifting a question which either cannot be solved, or, when decided, is not worth the trouble of sifting. Champagne is not kept on the tongue with aldermanic wisdom, like port, until you have pronounced it to be '58 and not '78, with an utter impossibility of proving the correctness of your verdict.

Champagne is like a sally, a flight of intellect or fancy, quickly come and quickly gone, nothing tedious, nor heavy, nor lagging behind, no headache (query? not if it is good, reader), nothing incompatible with the tastes of the ladies. And last, but not least, it is such a distinguished wine—aristocratic in every sense. Ladies hate vulgarity: champagne is not vulgar; gooseberry may be. Gooseberry, under another name, may be advertised like other wines, for its cheapness, its strength, its flavour, its popularity—all vulgar attributes. Champagne stands out from the crowd, sneered at by those that cannot pay for it, and dear to those that can.

Arabella looked with cheerful tenderness at Frederick, and whispered to him—

“You seem always so preoccupied.”

“I?” said Frederick; “not at all. Certainly I have my trouble like everybody else has. Will you have another glass of champagne, Arabella?”

“No, thank you, Frederick, I have drunk quite enough. Don’t I look red in the face?”

“You look charming, my dear,” replied he, his eyes sparkling and losing for a moment their habitual half-sinister expression.

“Are you coming to us to-morrow?” asked Arabella.

“No; I must leave town early to-morrow morning.”

Poor Arabella turned pale.

“Oh, I long so much to have a quiet talk with you! And my mother will be so annoyed: she thinks you are

getting quite neglectful. You do not seem at all to be the same person you used to be."

"Why, Arabella!" Frederick interrupted her. "You forget that we don't live in the same town now, that I cannot get leave when I like, and only for a day or two at a time."

"True enough, but still," said Arabella, "there seems to be a change about you that makes me quite sad."

"Nonsense, my dear. I am ever the same, only I have cares, as I told you."

"Cares?" inquired Arabella, looking at him searchingly and anxiously. "Will you promise me to call on us soon?"

"Yes," said Frederick, "on my next visit."

"When will that be?"

"Let me see, in about a fortnight, or sooner."

"Fix a day, Frederick. Oblige me, please, that I may tell ma too, and that we may be in when you come."

Frederick did not know when his colonel would give him leave again, but promised to write and state the day of his coming up to town. He would write within a week or ten days.

A supper-table, with hilarious guests all round her, was not exactly the place for Arabella to question Frederick about his cares or her hopes or fears.

It was getting late, and the clock of conviviality was about to run down. Tudor and Hugh Neilson had enjoyed themselves very much—never more so.

Hugh himself would have gone rather to ten parties like that than to one at his father's house. Although the presence of such orators as Messrs. Sherry, Carlton, and Harkhins naturally kept in abeyance any latent desire they may have felt to display their eloquence to the company there assembled, they had had their say nevertheless. They happened to sit next to very charming theatrical young ladies, full of wit, and full of life, that were not likely to mistake anything like a drag on the conversation, on their part, for *bon ton*.

Frederick shook hands with Tudor very cordially, and told him he would hear from him in a day or two. Everybody shook hands all round. Miss Adelina Baker laughed very much, and spoke a "leetle" th-ick.

Mrs. Gates said, within hearing of the company—"I say, Fred, I hope you arranged things satisfactorily with Bella. If I don't see you soon I must look you up; mind that! Give Bella your arm, Fred, and let me take the other."

Charley was now all bustle. He had disappeared from the scene for a time, but we do not think he slept. He only vanished from one scene to reappear at another. Every set of hats, bonnets, and coats was to add something to the *bond fide* surplus in his pocket. That night he dreamt of a huge pair of trousers, with a mammoth pocket full of fourpenny bits, sixpences, and shillings (no coppers), his faded head plunged in the middle, and his bare feet sticking out at the side of the pocket.

Frederick had the privilege of escorting the two

ladies home, and of kissing them both on parting. Mrs. Gates could not impress him more with the necessity of his soon calling on them than she had done when speaking to him on the subject in public.

On his way home Frederick pondered on her words, and in public too, "Look me up!" "to mind that!" Did she contemplate an action for breach of promise of marriage? or a call on his aristocratic father and mother?

CHAPTER XIII.

TUDOR had of late been spending rather more money than he ought to have done. Several times his uncle Thomas thought it his duty to remonstrate with him on the theme of his not knowing the value of money. Young people are like old people ; if they fancy a certain thing more than money, well then, they will give their money for it. Tudor, however, did nothing out of the way or very extravagant ; he had no vicious tendencies to entangle him in money difficulties. Still, instead of living within his means, he required several times an extra advance from home.

Mrs. Thompson had let her rich brother, Mr. Brown, know of these extra requirements of Tudor's, perhaps unthinkingly, but more likely as a hint to him that he ought to make his nephew some allowance which would enable him to live more suitably to his position as his uncle's heir. She did not reflect that her communication, showing that Tudor could not live within his means, might be indiscreet and of a nature to injure her son in the eyes of his uncle,

who was not the man who could say to himself, "Well, as long as the boy does not neglect his duty at the bank, and is not vicious out of it, I don't care whether he spends a hundred or so more, while his allowance is so small, and while so many social and public attractions are perfectly fresh to him." If he could have brought himself to think thus, and had given Tudor, now and then, a ten-pound note, with a little kind advice, we should have thought a good deal better of uncle Thomas than we do.

There are persons who show to those whom they wish to please, or from whom they hope to derive some advantage, the character they like best to see. They are something like the peep-show man who told the little girls, on their asking which was Wellington and which was Napoleon, "Which you please, my little dears; you pays your money and you takes your choice." Tudor was not one who could act in the spirit of the showman—"Do you like a Wellington? I am your man. Is a Napoleon your ideal? here I am." If he had been one of those who could hide their real character under the mask of an assumed one for the sake of expediency, he would have studied his uncle's character and wishes more than he did; he would have kept "dark" as regarded his requirements, and have paraded, before his uncle, well-contrived, economical displays. His uncle would then have said, "I like this boy, he is a good boy." A good boy indeed!

We have stated before what uncle Thomas wor-

shipped. We alluded somewhere to the proverb, "Tell me who your associates are, and I will tell you what you are;" but we think, "Tell me what you worship, and I will tell you what you are and how you will judge others," is more to be relied on.

Uncle Thomas judged his nephew according to the spirit of the sect of golden-calf worshippers to which he belonged—a sect most intolerant and narrow-minded. If Tudor could only have persuaded his uncle that he spent five pounds *less*, yearly, than his income, he would have looked sympathetically upon his nephew as a co-religionist. Five pounds saved, little as the sum is, he would have looked upon as a guarantee that Tudor possessed the true spirit of calculation and economy and could practice 'self-denial, and as an earnest of future commercial stability; but the balance was the other way, much the other way, as his nephew had not only saved nothing, but had required considerably more than his income. This produced, in Mr. Brown's mind, the germ of the spirit which leads the fraternity to which he *unconfessedly* belonged—the golden-calf worshippers—to anathematize and excommunicate their luckless young relatives. We say, in his mind, for we have no reason to think he took any actual steps in consequence, only that he fostered that feeling of distrust and repugnance which might lead him to excommunicate and disinherit his nephew hereafter.

Of the state of his uncle's feelings towards him Tudor was quite unconscious. He had been taught by

his mother, from his childhood, to look up to his uncle Thomas as the special Providence through which his prosperous future was secure, and he was content in the belief that the affection between his uncle and himself was mutual.

Tudor was affectionate, sincere, intellectual, and ambitious. He had health, youth, and a good conscience. If all these did not form the elements of happiness, what could ? He was neither envious nor covetous. Certainly he was ambitious, but then he was sanguinely hopeful. He was so placed by circumstances that his ambition concentrated in a desire to be at the head of an establishment like that of Messrs. Snyder, Tyler, Tyler, Snyder, & Co.'s. Do some of our readers adjudge this ambition as one unworthy of a hero ? Dear lady reader, could you not love a banker ? Are there not innumerable heroes in novels, upon whom the final sensational halo is thrown by apportioning to them, on their happy union with their respective heroines, the £10,000 or £20,000, or whatever the imposing sum may have been, which, for the purpose of trying the heroes like gold in the fire and making the readers, sympathetically and emotionally, suffer with them, was withheld up to the valedictory pages of the third and last volume ? There is another reason why we cannot dispense with the customary fortune of novel heroes : our hero was, unfortunately, born without a title. The endearing attribute of "Lord," or "The Earl of," or even simply "The Honourable Mr.," fate has cruelly denied us the privilege of prefixing to his name.

We are fully sensible of the disadvantage under which we labour. The art of producing an effect, made easy by writing, for instance, "And the Earl of Chevreille gave one of those looks so peculiar to him," cannot be made available by us. We must confess that we consider ourselves singularly unfortunate by having thrust upon our hands a hero with no other credentials than the obscure family name of Thompson. We readily grant that some of our very young lady readers might willingly have dispensed with a titled hero, on the ground that general social considerations, or political ones, are not of essential importance to them; but we hardly think it probable that they will be able to get over the shock which the family name of Thompson will give to their romantic sensibilities. It is true there were Thompsons and Smiths crusaders who, in their leisure hours, took the guitar (or perhaps "viol") under their arms, and threw the ladder of silken cord over their shoulders, to wander away to let their lady-loves, in the tower, know that they were below, ready to serenade them or to elope with them, as the case might be; but Tudor could not trace his pedigree back to mediæval knights-errant like these.

It may be argued that this is not a romantic age—that the poetical traditions of troubadours is sadly contrasted by banjo-playing white negroes. Minstrelsy may have vanished into the shadows of the past, but romance has not. Very young ladies, who feel that it is possible to fall in love with a young man

who has no title, still will very properly expect that his name ends in -cliffe, -mont, -ville, -val, -et, like Plantagenet, Duval, Mandeville, Neville, Egremont, Radcliffe; or in -ford, like Stratford, Ratford, Clifford, etc.

But this is an age of transitions. This is the age of rectifications of mental frontiers; the age of intellectual tournaments, in which the novel-writer has successfully broken lances with the romance-writer, not because the age is less romantic than former ones were, but because the world has become more critical as to the circumstances under which the hero acted, and as to the motives and deeds of the hero. Novels are trying to give honour to whom honour is due, by throwing off the god-like armour with which the hero of romance was in the habit of being clad by the author, and bringing to the test of common-sense the description which represents him as infallible, omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent. The "Captain Cliffords," who can ride any horse, no matter whether Rarey could tame it or not—who can overpower at least three brigands, single-handed—who are never absent, in critical moments of danger, from their lady-love—do not convey, nowadays, the spirit of romance with which we should love to see a hero endowed.

We have changed all this; and circumstances, too, are altered. Formerly a poet could write a romance based upon the separation of two lovers whom no other reason kept asunder, than the fact that they

did not know where to find each other. We are acquainted with a very beautiful poem, not very ancient either—for the author, we are happy to say, is still living,—where the heroine did not meet her lover until the closing scene of his long life, though they had been seeking each other from their youth. We can never read the poem again, since a young lady we know, on having read it through, very innocently asked her mother—"But, mamma, why did they not advertise?"

We do not think that this age is overburdened with defined ideas, and we do not admire a hero for the impossible physical exploits attributed to him. No, not even the Comte de Monte Christo, who could make a hole through a twelve foot wall without tools, swim in a sack, keep his breath under water irrespective of time, and turn towards treasures of diamonds, in distant isles, with as much ease and precision (and more effectually, for he reached them) as the unimpeded needle of the compass points towards the pole.

We trust our very young lady readers will not be angry at our alluding to their predilection for heroes with, we will say, sonorous names, for we share this liking. Still, there may be romance in a Thompson; but if, towards the end of the third volume, we should feel instinctively that we have been wrong, well, then we will change his name.

Tudor was reading a philosophical work in which he felt deeply interested (he was fond of such studies),

when Frederick Danmer called upon him. This was not long after the party at the Philadelphia Hotel. It was Frederick's first call.

Tudor was much pleased to see him. He had no motive for searching Frederick's heart to see why he called. If he had never called, Tudor would not have thought anything of it; as he did call he took it as a matter of course. Besides, he brought him money. True, he might have sent him a cheque, but if any one personally brings you money he owes you, you do not think it odd, especially if such a person be one with whom you are already socially acquainted.

Frederick Danmer, ever since Carlton alluded to Tudor and Hugh Neilson, had an indistinct idea that it might be worth his while, if opportunity offered, to cultivate their acquaintance for the purpose of opening up fresh fields and pastures new. His social avenues leading to the money market were all blocked up; and the business roads, *pure et simple*, he never could frequent.

Mr. Harris Harris was not a business man, *pure et simple*. The trade which is limited to a fair article and a fair profit, either for sale or purchase, was not appreciated by him. In fact, it was too *pure et simple* a thing for him. Mr. Harris was fond of complications: he traded not only with, but also upon—upon weakness, selfishness, improvidence, poverty; all bad qualities. That is why Mr. Harris's conscience was so placid. He was a Nemesis in his line of business. How it was that he also traded upon a few good quali-

ties, such as friendship, affection, love, as if they were bad, we must simply ascribe to his ignorance. If a man is no farmer he may not be able to distinguish wheat from tares. As Mr. Harris never owned a field of morality, nor ever worked even the smallest patch of one, he was quite unacquainted with spiritual agriculture. On a broad basis, he knew that tares were considered bad and wheat good. As he was a very just man, the wheat was all on his side and the tares on the side of his customers. Poor Emily's jewels were tares—so would her sisterly affection be classified by him as tares; while his generosity in dealing with Frederick was wheat—so was a certain picture he had, all wheat. When a man gives his wheat for other people's tares, he must be either a fool or a very generous man. Mr. Harris Harris was no fool.

Frederick had driven as hard a bargain with him as he could. The result was pitiable in the extreme, so far as Frederick was concerned. The cash, which was the very thing that he bargained for, was handed to him in so microscopical a quantity, that it was hardly visible to the naked eye; but then there was an oil-painting sent him which by no means lacked in size.

Mr. Harris valued that picture very much. We do not know whether it was some great original, or the copy of a great original. So, if Frederick's eyesight was strained on the money side, it was greatly benefited in an artistic sense.

The money-lender, almost with paternal care, also provided for Frederick's palate; for, amongst the

things sent, instead of money, were two cases of wine, not priceless—for a good price was put on them ; but rare. The bargain stood thus: very little money, a very big picture, very rare wine, and a very large interest (on account of the risk), on one side ; a bill representing much money (with Danmer's and another friend's names) and Emily's jewels as collateral security, on the other. That bill had to run a little time yet, but Frederick was anxious to go betimes on an exploring expedition for funds to meet it.

You cannot at once ask a man, whom you see for the second time in your life, to lend you a large sum of money, or to give you his name. Frederick was quite aware of that. There was an awkwardness in the fact that Frederick and Tudor did not live in one and the same town. The process of cultivating Tudor's acquaintance by slow and natural degrees into the more valuable species known under the name of friendship, was not favoured by circumstances.

After various topics had been discussed or touched upon by the two acquaintances, Danmer said, "What a sedentary life yours is ! Hang me if I could stand it."

"I don't know," said Tudor : "our business hours are very reasonable ; then we have the Saturday afternoons and Sundays. Every vocation in life has its drawbacks. You, for instance, may be ordered away with bag and baggage at twenty-four hours' notice, or you may be sent to a distant colony to fight the yellow fever ; at Messrs. Snyders' bank our daily

occupation flows on evenly and tranquilly, without ebbs or floods such as you are exposed to."

"Well, that's true enough, but soldiers must be prepared for an unexpected change of quarters, even from this world to the next. For my part I love a change, and the constant probability of my regiment being ordered on foreign service keeps up within me a pleasant little feeling of excitement. I do not think I could live in a bank, as you do, for any consideration."

"But we get our change, too, every year; and a comfortable change I call it, for we can go where we please and as we please. Now very shortly I shall have my holidays," said Tudor.

"Certainly, that's pleasant enough," replied Danmer. "About a fortnight, I suppose?"

"Yes," answered Tudor, "sometimes a month, if we specially ask for it. Messrs. Snyder are very liberal in that respect."

"Have you already made up your mind where to go?" inquired Danmer.

"I was thinking of going to Switzerland," answered Tudor.

"To Switzerland!" exclaimed Danmer. "You do not wish to render yourself famous by an untoward fall from the Matterhorn?"

"No, not if I know it," said Tudor; "that's a sort of celebrity I could never see the fun of. If I went to Switzerland, it would be for the enjoyment of grand scenery, which may be contemplated without such

danger. I should also delight in studying the manners and customs of the simple mountain people."

"Simple mountain people! Why, you must be inexperienced!" interrupted Danmer. "Simple mountain people! There is nothing simple under the sun, nowadays, as regards nations. If you go to the remotest corners of the earth, pounds, shillings, and pence will meet with cringing civility; but as to simplicity, it is mere ignorance."

"There is something in what you say," replied Tudor, "as to pounds, shillings, and pence; their worshippers seem to be on the increase, if we are to be guided by the spirit of extortion that has made itself manifest at Vienna and Paris. They thought in the 'Holy City,' as well as in the 'Kaiserstadt,' that an exhibition was a newly invented means for making the fortunes of every one of them, man, woman, and child."

"And how impudent they were!" said Danmer. "I went over to see the Paris Exhibition of '67, and after driving about for a time from one hotel to another without being taken in, because they were full, the landlord of a second or third-rate hotel condescended to have a parley with us. He would not let us have any rooms for a less time than five days, although we told him distinctly that we could not stay longer than two. We had to give in, and pay for five days in advance. He followed us into the *salle-à-manger*, and we ordered dinner, and, without waiting to see whether we would not order wine, he stared at

us with his glassy, greedy eyes, and very impertinently asked, 'Et vous ne buvez pas de vin donc ?' "

"Oh, I understand," said Tudor: "where greediness has reached such a pitch, good-bye decency."

"There are many places in England where a man may spend a fortnight or three weeks very pleasantly without scampering over the Continent—a fortnight or even a month is too short a time. . In August and September there is no place in the world pleasanter than England. There's yachting, and racing, and shooting, not to speak of parties in country houses. Down where I am quartered, there is no end of amusement at that time of the year, and this year we have a general election. Do you know any one down there?" said Danmer.

"No," Tudor answered; "if I did, I think I should like to go there for once."

"Oh," said Danmer, "if you are inclined to come down, you'll soon know plenty of people. I'll introduce you to our fellows; they are a jolly set, and we have a drag. We are getting up a steeplechase. Do say you will come."

"Well," said Tudor, "it seems tempting; I will."

"When do you get your holiday?" asked Danmer.

"In the beginning of August," Tudor replied.

"That's the very thing; you will be just in time for all the fun," said Danmer.

When he left Tudor he felt convinced in some way that he had made a step in the right direction towards his own interest.

CHAPTER XIV.

In a central part of London was a tolerably large building, of no very imposing or remarkable appearance outside, but as soon as you stepped inside, you became aware that you were on premises devoted to some important purpose. It looked like neither an hotel, nor a bank, nor Government offices. It was, in fact, a club-house—the A 1 Club. Its members, with few exceptions, were all A 1—their aims, their arguments, their verdicts, their tastes, were all A 1; their politics were A 1. In that club, authors, statesmen, crowned heads, questions of the day—political, social, religious—were disposed of in an unexceptionable A 1 style. We have been earnestly endeavouring to ascertain whether these A 1 members really thought themselves to be A 1.

Who can read the human heart? It is hard to believe that they did not; for how could they continually find fault with the page, or the waiter, with the knives, the forks, the glasses, with the salad, and the cooking generally, if they did not believe

themselves to be superior men—A 1. How, otherwise, could it be that nothing came amiss to them; that they adjudicated upon and disposed of in the most summary, off-hand manner, questions of the highest social, intellectual, and moral import? It is, indeed, hard to think that they did not feel themselves to be A 1 in all things, as everything and everybody poor and undistinguished was despised by them and treated accordingly. Who but men who have the highest opinion of themselves can judge every other person according to his just deserts? The members of the A 1 Club, with few exceptions, knew how to treat a nobody and how to honour a somebody. But then, on the other hand, how was it that they were always so anxious to parade their A-oneship?

Persons conscious of their superiority, though far from putting their light under a bushel, still do not thrust it into everybody's face, either rudely or obsequiously. In the hearts of most of the members of the A 1 Club there must have been a vague uneasiness, a vein of uncertainty as to their own greatness, closely, but very naturally, connected with a fear of obscurity, insignificance, or vulgarity in themselves. That may be the reason why they were careful, in their contact with the world, to keep up a constant, well-sustained effort to assert their A-oneship, from not returning the polite salute of a nobody, whom they only casually met in society, to actually, at the risk of their limbs, crossing a thoroughfare at an inopportune moment, to shake hands with Captain Blackbird, of

the Royal Artillery, who had forgotten their names. That uncertainty or uneasiness was perhaps the reason why they thirsted to be conspicuous, why everything they did was done in a marked way and always in "tip-top" style. A person who thinks it necessary to uphold his A-oneship, like a temperance man his banner against brandy, has to vary his style, his manners, his topics, and his verdicts according to the audience, for what may make an impression upon one, may be left utterly unheeded by another. Thus the A 1 Club members had continually to be on the *qui vive*, lest they should be thought to be nobodies.

Frederick Danmer, with breakers ahead, was anxious to procure more boats than one, in case one should leak or the gear should be found faulty, so he bethought himself of his friend Carlton, who had such a medley of social acquaintances, that he seemed to be a very likely man to open some channel which might prove serviceable to him.

Egremont Carlton was taken into Frederick's confidence—that is, after the fashion of this world, so far and no further.

The art of taking people into your confidence is not so easy. To tell them just what you please, is one thing; to convey to their minds just what you tell and no more, is another.

Carlton's acquaintances and friends were, as our readers may easily imagine, not confined to one layer of society. He had known officers before that were hard up. Still, everything combined to make him

suspect that Frederick was a degree or two harder up than he liked to divulge.

The members of the money market are at all times, and for everybody, more or less inaccessible personally, from Messrs. Snyder, Tyler, Tyler, Snyder, and Co., downwards, and all legitimate or illegitimate ramifications included.

Mr. Carlton was a man who now and then himself found the accessibility of a high priest in the money market a great convenience. His resources in that direction were just as limited as, perhaps, Frederick's. When people have only one horse to ride, they are not likely to ask their friends to mount behind.

If Carlton made up his mind not to lead Frederick into the path which he wanted to reserve for himself, he was, nevertheless, unwilling to let him think that he was not most eager to oblige him.

"My dear fellow," he said, "if it is in my power to help you, I shall be most happy to do so. At the present moment I am myself under an obligation to a friend, whose resources are limited. I don't know of any one just now that would be your man. Let me see. Oh, there's the A 1 Club! I might take you there."

Carlton was a member of that club, although not exactly of the A 1 type. He was satisfied to be a member for the sake of the really good dinners, good wine, and occasionally pleasant society to be met there, without his aiming at the standard of high quality which was the cherished attribute of the large

majority of the members. There were a few others in that club of whom the same might be said, and who, like Carlton, knew by judicious flattery how to extract occasionally, from the illiberal members of the club, favours or benefits.

Carlton himself did not see his way clear to ultimate success for Frederick in the A 1 Club. But that did not matter so much, if Frederick was impressed with his readiness to oblige him. Nobody sees his way clear in anything—a fact which seems to dawn upon this generation, and to cause anxiety and commotion accordingly. Still, Carlton was not anxious, for the result did not concern himself, but Frederick. In this, Carlton was as other people are: it is not easy to feel for another as you do for yourself—we generally bear our friends' troubles with great equanimity.

One fine afternoon Carlton and Danmer hailed a hansom, and drove down (or up?) to the A 1 Club.

Frederick was, as our readers know, a distinguished-looking person, and when Carlton and he sat down in the club dining-room, an A 1 member, sitting a few tables removed, made it his business to take stock of the guest. After a careful scrutiny, the A 1 member must have come to the conclusion in his own mind that the strange gentleman was a somebody—perhaps an officer in the Guards. The A 1 member at once thought it necessary to render himself conspicuous by behaving as he fancied a Guardsman would behave in his club.

Under no circumstances did the members of the

club call the club servants "Jim," or "Charley;" this was quite incompatible with their aristocratic manners and conservative principles. "James," or "Charles," pronounced in that measured, quiet, even tone, which denotes a gentleman, was the usual thing; but in this instance, with a probable Life Guardsman present, "James" and "Charles" were hardly imposing enough.

"I say, you fellah; why don't you bring me the *Times*, while you make me wait eva so long for my dinnah?"

Under ordinary circumstances the A 1 member, whose name we suppress in this instance, as we have no desire to be personal, patronized the *Daily Meteor*, but now the *Times* was in requisition. When he had got the *Times*, instead of reading it, he betook himself to examining the knives and forks, and the plates.

"I say, you fellah! he-a. Look at this fowk; don't you bwing me such a fowk again; do ye hea-a?"

Gradually more A 1 members arrived; and as the room became fuller, individual efforts to impress the stranger were difficult.

Still, the edification, as regarded Frederick, was not altogether over. At the next table three or four A 1 members were sitting, and treating Frederick to the A 1 opinions of the day.

"I say, this Bismarck—aw—" (with a side glance on Frederick) "this Bismarck don't know his business—aw," said one.

"He will find that he overstepped the mark," said another.

"Napoleon is my man," said the first. "He may have been unfortunate, but—aw—he was a great man for all that."

"Success is all the go nowadays; it does not matter whether you are clever or not," said the second.

"That's just it," said the third.

"By-the-by," said the fourth, "What's the feeling of the country with regard to the general election?"

"Oh, conservative, of course," said member one.

"Those liberals had a long spell of it, hadn't they?" said member two.

"They ruined the country," said member three; whilst member four thought he felt the truth of this last remark in his own affairs, but abstained from expressing it.

People do not sail so close to the wind as that. As a rule a prosperous business man complains of bad times, and commercials who do little boast much.

Frederick, on his part, took stock of the company, too, but as he trusted to Carlton, as the pilot in these unknown waters, he could only make minor observations and draw general conclusions.

During the evening Frederick was introduced to several of the members. Amongst them was one upon whom Carlton had set his hopes specially. This was Mr. Augustus Lightfoot, one of the most energetic business men of the day.

He was the sub-agent of a millionaire, a very liberal man, and known for getting up companies, limited. Mr. Lightfoot was not one of the club members of the A 1 type, he was too much of a business man for that. He did not mind being Z zero, which is the very opposite to A 1, provided the A 1 people took shares. He was just busy for a new company, "The Assorted Precious Stones Mining Company, Limited."

"I say, Carlton," said Mr. Lightfoot, "do you want to make your fortune?"

"No, thank you, not to-day. A new company?" said Carlton.

"Yes; a splendid mining company, limited. A mine where precious stones are found, beautifully assorted!"

"No, thank you once more," said Mr. Carlton; "but let me introduce you to my friend here. Mr. Lightfoot," said he, introducing him. "Mr. Danmer, of the ——"

Both bowed.

"Cash is scarce with us just now," said Carlton.

"The deposit is only five shillings a share," said Mr. Lightfoot, "and ten to one the rest will never be called up, for there's quite an excitement about this company."

"Well, suppose I or my friend did take a lot of shares, and hadn't the cash to pay for them, do you know a source where we could raise some money?" asked Carlton, rather innocently.

"Hundreds," replied Lightfoot.

"Hundreds?" repeated Carlton.

"Yes, with proper security," said Lightfoot.

Frederick's face fell, for he thought that there was little chance in the A 1 Club of his obtaining a loan, if Carlton had "no reserves."

Of course Carlton had no reserves, as our readers know. He had little hope in the beginning, although he felt, at Mr. Lightfoot's "hundreds," as a digger would who knocks against a stone and thinks it is a nugget.

Poor Frederick! the A 1 Club was not his legitimate social sphere.

At the supper which Carlton gave, any gentleman might have been present. There was something genial and Bohemian about it which could never find its way to the A 1 Club. Where there is no pretence there is no vulgarity; but the A 1 Club was full of pretence.

Certainly Frederick's position was such that he was much exposed to all sorts of expenditure that he did not care for personally, and in which, consequently, he would not have indulged had there been no force of example on the part of his brother officers, and no general pecuniary obligations from which he could not escape. Still he was selfish and weak, and fate is the cleverest general extant—it brings all its forces, through combined circumstances, upon a man's particular bad or weak point.

One of the greatest punishments for men who do wrong is that their wrong accumulates, like a snow-

ball rolling down a slope, to a size which they little anticipated at the outset. They think they can keep certain little indulgences within their control, while, in reality, they create a monster, a Frankenstein, which awes and haunts them.

Poor Frederick! he could not deny himself anything where his personal gratification was concerned. But all illegitimate indulgences cost more money than legitimate ones. In fact, a man that walks in the right path finds that the greatest enjoyments are those which cost no money. Besides, life is made up of innumerable little things, and Providence provides countless little enjoyments gratis for those whom their own passions or vices have not made monomaniacs, who, as such, see nothing but their one desire.

Frederick's selfish indulgences assumed, by way of punishment, money troubles, that made him wretched. Money troubles are great troubles—they can never be regarded lightly; still, with some they may be comparatively a light burden. It depends upon what we have done, and what is at stake when they reach their climax. What was there not at stake with Frederick when his money troubles should reach their climax?

CHAPTER XV.

ABOUT this time, when Frederick's affairs gave him so much anxiety, Emily had a dream. We almost hesitate to allude to this dream, for dreams, generally, are like the signs of the weather; you may watch them for a life-time and still be at a loss to decide whether it will rain the next day or whether the sun will shine. And, moreover, you might be engaged in something more useful or satisfactory than standing about espying unreliable indications. The weather, after all, will come as it listeth, and must be taken as it comes; and so must the events of life.

Thus there are people who watch dreams while they might do something better. Now and then, however, there comes a dream in a person's life that means something—at least, the person to whom such a dream comes thinks so; and so strongly is the individual impressed with its prophetic meaning, that all the clever arguments which are generally brought

against the existence of spiritual or supernatural agencies could not eradicate that impression.

As it is rather troublesome, and perhaps impossible, to bring all the requisite proofs for convincing your opponent, when arguing, you are apt to lighten the labour by pitching upon one particular point, from which you deduce, with wonderful self-satisfaction, and, to your own mind, most striking logic, this, that, and the other thing. In this way there are, for instance, persons who are quite positive that dreams cannot have any spiritual meaning, because they themselves had bad dreams from eating a cold pork supper probably.

Others, again, very sharply demonstrate that because they themselves never had any but everyday dreams, which meant nothing, other people cannot possibly have dreams that mean something. Some years ago we actually met a gentleman, in a London omnibus, who propounded seriously the somewhat novel theory that all illness man is subject to arises from the use of salt. Never having seen the gentleman before, we naturally calculated how far we were from the 'bus door, in case he should have happened to find himself at large by some neglect or oversight on the part of somebody. However, we found him quite harmless, and simply put him down as one of those many specimens, rather *prononcé*, of men who assert, and take credit to themselves for having discovered the first cause of something, if not of everything. How kind nature is in giving innumer-

able speculative heads a resting-point like unto that of the salt man !

There are persons who deny the existence of ghosts on the ground that in a certain house which was said to be haunted the mystery was solved in the most natural way ; which is equivalent to proving that because a certain bottle, which was supposed to hold vinegar, was found to contain wine, no bottle can possibly contain vinegar. The subject is rather too difficult for us to handle ; we must treat it as if, in digging, we had come upon a very big stone, a most unsatisfactory stone ; if we leave it alone the surface land above it is certainly very shallow, if we dig it out it does not pay. It might, besides, turn out to be a rock that we cannot dig out.

Emily had a dream. She dreamt that she was standing outside her father's house, which was a corner house, and, looking down the long street, she saw her brother standing at the end of it in full uniform, looking very well and *distingué*. All of a sudden an enormous dark dust-cloud enveloped him and rendered him invisible to her, and a mighty rush of wind sent the dust-cloud towards her, partially enveloping her also ; still she glided on to the other side of the street, under shelter of the corner house opposite, while the densest portion of the dust-storm swept by. She then saw the cloud rest, and partially rise, while her brother, in rags, was lying on a bed of rotten boards, his uniform in a pool of muddy water. Close by stood a man, whom she did not know, with

his hands bound. Presently a commotion rose up behind the dust-cloud—sparks of fire, in fact a perfect display of countless rockets presented itself, and drove the dust-cloud away, the strange man's hands were freed, and she awoke.

This dream made a great impression upon Emily's mind. She was sure it foreboded to Frederick some evil; even to her, although she heeded herself least. Any evil to Frederick, and to her, if even in a much lesser degree, could not but affect her father and mother too. There was, however, a clearing away of the dark dust-cloud, the surprising display of the rockets, which would indicate a satisfactory *dénouement*; of the strange man she could make nothing. Frederick, too, was not there when the fire swept the dust-cloud away. She did not tell this dream to her mother, nor to any one else. She appeared at the breakfast table just as usual, outwardly at least.

"My dear Emily," said Mrs. Danmer, "didn't you say that you would go and see Mrs. Drybread to-day?"

"Yes, mamma, as soon as Margaret is ready."

Emily was in the habit of visiting her poorer neighbours at short intervals, accompanied by Margaret, an old servant who had lived with Mrs. Danmer before Emily was born, and who carried on such occasions a well-filled basket, containing such little luxuries as are most valued by the poorer classes. The Drybreads were one of the families

which Emily was in the habit of thus visiting. She and Margaret went out, and when Emily reached home again her father and mother were in the drawing-room. They looked very happy and contented; the theme of their conversation must have been a pleasing one. On entering she kissed her mother and father, and they inquired of her concerning the adventures of her almsgiving expedition.

After Emily had duly given an account of herself, and related what little news she had to report, her father told her that he regretted she was not in, for Sir Herbert Forrester had called. They had invited him to dine with them, but his stay in town was so short this time that he had to decline it.

"What a nice frank character he seems to be!" said Mrs. Danmer.

"A splendid fellow in every respect," said the major. "He inquired very particularly after you, Emily."

"I am sorry I was not in, papa," said Emily; and Mrs. Danmer remarked, "I am so glad that Frederick has such desirable acquaintances down there as Sir Herbert and his mother."

"Has he not two sisters, mamma?"

"I believe he spoke of two sisters," said Mrs. Danmer. "From what we could gather, Frederick seems to be a great favourite with the ladies at Forrest Court."

Whether the fond parents had each respectively formed distinct wishes or hopes in their hearts with

regard to the future of their son and daughter, in a matrimonial sense, we cannot at present tell.

The experiences of mankind are contradictory in their variety, and so are the rules of life and proverbs deduced from them. We cannot venture upon casting Frederick's and Emily's horoscopes with a special reference as to whom they will marry. There is the saying, "Coming events cast their shadows before them;" and Goethe says, "Good and bad come to man unexpectedly;" and again, we hear of presentiments and evil forebodings and freaks of good fortune, of truth stranger than fiction; so that our fiction is at a perfect loss to get at the truth. It is possible that the major and his wife had begun to encourage the hope that "Coming events were casting their shadows before them."

CHAPTER XVI.

FREDERICK'S relation towards Arabella caused him more uneasiness than pleasure, although pleasure to him was the motive which, at the outset, made him seek Arabella's society. He was certainly very fond of Arabella—she had a peculiar attraction for him. Her individuality seemed to respond to Frederick's tastes, and he was continually impelled towards her, though with a feeling of reserve and putting off to the future any consideration as to consequences or sacrifices on his part. Arabella would have sacrificed all for Frederick, that he himself put a reserve on; at least, she thought so, and very probably it would have been so had she been in a position to prove it.

Theoretically, we frequently ascribe to ourselves a liberality which, if practically called upon to prove, we should fall far short of doing. So it may have been with Arabella.

From the very beginning, Frederick wanted to keep his acquaintanceship with her within a certain compass and under a desirable control. But we are very

powerless to shape our fate. What we think we can manage, we cannot, and difficulties that we fancy are insurmountable we unexpectedly glide over with ease.

"If it were not for that disgusting old woman, Mrs. Gates," thought Frederick, "Arabella could be easily managed."

A very natural reflection, too, especially to those who knew Mrs. Gates; and as to Arabella, we are, as we said, at a loss, with any certainty of practical result, to conjecture what she would or would not have done for him under certain circumstances.

Perhaps Arabella was not sorry that she had her mother to act the part she did, as Frederick seemed to require an impulse, which Mrs. Gates was in every sense a more proper person to give than herself. Arabella had been anxiously desirous to see Frederick. He had written several times to her, always explaining, as it appeared satisfactorily, why he was prevented from calling.

Frederick was afraid of Mrs. Gates. Her last words to him were ominous, savouring of a breach-of-promise case, and there was no knowing what injury Mrs. Gates might be able to do him if she grew restive. She might go to his father, or write to his colonel, and, if things did not come to the worst, annoy him greatly or render him ridiculous.

He might have ignored Arabella and her mother altogether, but everything combined towards his not doing so. There was the fact of his being irresistibly

impelled towards Arabella, as we have said, in connection with his desire and hope to keep things within his power to control, and his embarrassing position as regards money matters—a position which he had to guard jealously from shocks which might be the cause of a series of subsequent shocks, numerous and powerful enough to bring on a crushing catastrophe.

The poet speaks of “starting like a guilty thing.” Frederick certainly felt like a coward when he thought of Mrs. Gates, which was no doubt traceable to his conscience. He had avoided confronting her as long as he possibly could. As to further postponing his visit to her and Arabella, he decided that it would be injudicious. Everything has its limits, and he knew Mrs. Gates's temper. His temporizing policy had so far prevented an outbreak—passive resistance is a very powerful mode of defence; on the other hand, Mrs. Gates's position was a very strong one for attack, and she had the support of an auxiliary force in the shape of an “attorney friend.”

We had occasion, in the beginning of this volume, to speak of a “respectable” solicitor. The one we now speak of belonged to that class which constitutes the vultures of society, always hovering about, looking after carcasses to fatten upon. Mr. Percival Jenkins had no clients that were not his friends, or, ought we to say that he had no friends that he did not make his clients? What we want to convey is this: Mr. Jenkins, in default of a *clientèle*, or a circle of clients made in the routine of a respectably conducted busi-

ness, found it expedient to constitute himself a social business trap for the purpose of catching clients.

In this way he had no friends but what he caught, or if he did not catch them they were not his friends. He never purchased any bait, but very properly let his friends furnish it in the shape of their own propensities. The moment he could lay hold of the proper propensities to suit his purpose, he put them in his trap, and captivated his clients ; and when he had them once fast, he did not let them out again until they had paid the uttermost farthing. There was not a visit that he paid, nor a party, nor a supper, nor any other social enjoyment at which he assisted, that he did not try to turn it to account professionally. He was a sort of commercial agent, who traded upon the litigious material he could detect in the characters of persons with whom he associated.

Where there is ever so slight an incline it requires but a gentle push and the car will run astonishingly easy and with increasing velocity, till it has reached a certain point beyond the limits of the descent, which may be on a dead level or a little up-hill again. Mr. Jenkins seldom made a *faux-pas*, and if he did it did not matter—it was no loss to him, it was only so much less gain. If a social acquaintance would not go into his gin, he simply discarded him as not worth cultivating.

Mr. Jenkins started his business with one friend, but at the period to which we allude his career was less precarious, as he had managed to increase the number of his friends.

When we look at the anxieties to which some business people are exposed in the process of watching their goods or protecting them from all varieties of damage, arising from theft or pilfering, from rust or moths; when we take into consideration the risks commercial houses run by giving credit for goods sold and delivered, for goods worth having, we cannot help envying Mr. Jenkins. As to goods, he was as free as the bird in the air. He had no goods. What stock he had in his office did not belong to him. Like Mr. William Deed, the respectable solicitor, he had also deed-boxes in his office, but as his friends in the deed line had, as yet, not been very numerous, there was, to some extent, "a beggarly show of empty boxes," and if they had all been full they would have been his clients', not his, and if they had all been burnt he would have turned the calamity to account—calamities were quite in his line. There was sometimes an earnestness and a sincerity about him that was quite refreshing.

On sundry occasions, when a friend brought him a copy of a will in which he (the friend) was interested, he would, while perusing it, exclaim "Capital!" "Excellent!" "Very good!" to the great reassurance of his friend. In reality, however, these exclamations were nothing but his thoughts, unconsciously expressed aloud, as a man, in a very exciting situation or a dream, speaks without himself being aware of it. They meant "capital" and "excellent" from his point of view, which was, that the will was so worded as to promise plenty of litigation. If Mr. Percival

Jenkins hated one thing more than another, it was the word "legitimate." Everything illegitimate was bait; everything legitimate was "rubbish," affording no chance of profitable working.

Legitimate things are settled with a minimum amount of trouble and expense, and Mr. Jenkins was opposed on principle to the minimum of both trouble and expense—that is, on the side of his clients. Suppose Mr. Jenkins's bill of costs had been legitimate—it might have been legal; but there is a difference between things legitimate and legal, especially when a lawyer is on the legal side.

Mrs. Gates had not known Mr. Jenkins very long; she saw him last at the supper-party at the Philadelphia, where Mr. Jenkins made one of the company, having secretly planted his business trap for a friend who was there. One fine afternoon, just after Frederick had written again and postponed his visit to her and Arabella, she met Mr. Jenkins in Regent Street.

Mrs. Gates began to think Fred was a slippery customer. She had many times thought of asking a solicitor's advice with regard to him, but being a "poor widow," she could not make up her mind to do it as a regular matter of business, which would involve regular preliminary expenses on her part before she could see her way satisfactorily. Meeting Mr. Jenkins, she thought it an excellent opportunity for getting a little friendly advice gratis. There is something very fascinating about getting things gratis. Mrs. Gates had contemplated her case so long with

a view to an attorney, that she was just prepared to fall into Mr. Jenkins's trap—something like the little bird that looked a little too long at the serpent and dropped into his mouth utterly powerless to resist its fate.

“C'est le premier pas qui coûte” say the French ; but as the first step did not cost Mrs. Gates anything, as she thought, there was every likelihood that the second would cost Frederick something. One would almost think that Mr. Jenkins was justified in catching his friends, for they were most provoking. The idea of paying rent for an office, and to keep a staff for one's friends—for friends that grudge even a legitimate fee ! Certainly they do not deserve much consideration. Mr. Jenkins was the very man for them. When people are socially acquainted with a fish-monger, they do not get their fish for nothing on that account. Why should Mr. Jenkins give to his friends his legal advice gratis ? Why, that's the very article that is never taken when it costs nothing. The market is flooded with advice to such an extent that it may be had for the taking away. But that sort of advice is of no use. The world knows pretty much what is worth having and what is not.

How unsuspecting we often are of the motives of those who are apparently on a very friendly footing with us ! Frequently we do not discern the character of a friend or relation until, in the course of time, a series of circumstances touching our mutual connections or interests have rolled off into the past, and

then some event or reference, to our surprise at our blindness, opens our eyes to their true cause and character.

Mrs. Gates did not think she was doing anything mean when she asked Mr. Jenkins for his "friendly" advice; but why should Mr. Jenkins feel the injury so much that he made up his mind to make Mrs. Gates pay for it? The fact is, Mr. Jenkins had a grudge against society generally, for giving him the trouble to go about socially trying to catch clients. Why did they give him the trouble to angle for them, like shy fish in muddy waters? Why did they not come up to him and say, "Here I am, take me; I see you are hungry?"

Mr. Jenkins was of a hungry nature. What a lucky thing it was for him that there was such a thing as law! He knew human nature so well, that he was sure that if fate had entrusted him with the sale of some *bonâ fide* article, the world would have driven him to desperation, for they would have taken his goods and tried to avoid paying for them in some way or other. In that respect he had reason to be satisfied with things as they were; there is nothing so bad but it might be worse. He dealt in the identical article that costs least and sells highest, and does not sell the less because people generally hope that in their own particular case they will want very little of it.

His business offered another advantage which very few others have. His clients could not ask for the

price of his goods beforehand: in that particular he certainly derived the same advantage which some builders and contractors have over their customers, when they get them to agree to their fatal proposal—"leave it to me." You could not be so rude or unreasonable as to say to Mr. Jenkins, "I want you to bring a certain matter of business to a satisfactory conclusion, but before I explain, I wish you to tell me what it will cost." He would naturally reply, "How can I tell, unless I know what you will want?" or "You owe me six and eight already, for addressing me." Law, such as Mr. Jenkins dealt in, is not like a Dutch cheese, that the customer can get weighed before he buys it, and with which, when the price is agreed on, the grocer has no more trouble than he foresaw he would have, that is, putting it in paper and tying a string round it before sending it home.

Mr. Jenkins's law was like a pearl in the deep sea, which his client coveted, and which to endeavour to get, there might be no end of trouble, and all, perhaps, without succeeding in getting it in the end. With the limited resources that presented themselves to Mr. Jenkins for gratifying his hungry disposition, it would have been most unfair to expect of him advice to the effect that it was rather hazardous to go to so much expense for so small a pearl, and that, under any circumstances, it would cost more to get it than it was worth. Moreover, how could he know that it would cost more to get than it was worth? Are people's feelings worth nothing? Why, a person

might pay him a bill of costs to the amount of £100, and get nothing at all for it, and still be highly elated on account of having gratified his feelings against his legal adversary. The more we think of Mr. Jenkins's character, the less we are inclined to condemn him. He had reasons for having a bad opinion of the world, and never felt that there could be a limit to his requirements in the way of money. He was not an insincere man, as we mentioned before, and he could at times even identify himself entirely with his clients. Of course, in writing letters, for instance, he furnished the style according to his client's requirements, and with which style his own personal feelings had nothing to do as a rule. In fact, if they had, they would have worn him out; but now and then he fell in with a friend upon whom he looked as a milch cow, to milk which he conceived to be his exclusive privilege. And when he found such an unsuspecting animal, it was astonishing with what gentle but steady manipulation it was milked dry without its detecting the exhausting process, until it could yield no more.

"Oh, how do you do?" said Mrs. Gates, on meeting him. "I am so glad to see you; why, you are quite a stranger. I was in hopes you would have called upon us before this."

"I intended to wend my way towards your region, but one engagement or another prevented me," said Mr. Jenkins. "How is Miss Gates?" he asked.

"Thank you, she is quite well. By-the-by, that

reminds me of a little matter. You are the very gentleman to give me a little information——”

“Which way are you going?” asked Mr. Jenkins, interrupting her.

“Oh, this way,” said Mrs. Gates, and Mr. Jenkins walked by her side; for it is not pleasant in a London thoroughfare to converse without “moving on,” as the police have it.

“I was going to say,” said Mrs. Gates, “there is a little matter I should like to talk over. You know my daughter Bella is engaged?”

“Certainly. You introduced me to the gentleman the other night; Mr. Danvers, I believe?” answered Mr. Jenkins.

“Mr. Danmer,” said Mrs. Gates, correcting him; “an officer in the army.”

“Has he money?” inquired Mr. Jenkins.

“He is of a very good family indeed,” said Mrs. Gates.

“What are they?” asked Mr. Jenkins.

“Why, his father is a gentleman of independent fortune—Major Danmer; he lives at Kensington,” said Mrs. Gates.

“Oh, a major!” exclaimed Mr. Jenkins, rather deprecatingly, as it seemed. Not that he thought little of majors in the abstract, but from the way Mrs. Gates said “a gentleman of independent fortune,” Mr. Jenkins had instinctively pictured to his mind a more promising mark, so far as mere money went, than, as a rule, retired military officers appeared to him to be.

Still, the case was promising from the positions of both son and father.

If Frederick Danmer really was, socially, what Mrs. Gates led Mr. Jenkins to believe, then he would never marry Miss Gates—a conclusion at which Mr. Jenkins arrived without much reflection. “A fairish little amount in the way of compromise might be got out of them,” thought Mr. Jenkins; from which he might deduct his bill of costs comfortably before he handed Mrs. Gates the balance, if any. Mr. Jenkins determined at the instant to follow this business up.

“Will you be at home the day after to-morrow?” he inquired of Mrs. Gates.

“What time?” asked she.

“Let me see; suppose I call upon you about tea-time, say between six and seven?”

“We shall be most happy to see you. Come and take tea with us, will you?” said Mrs. Gates.

“With pleasure,” said Mr. Jenkins. “Well, you will excuse me now,” he added, offering his hand. “I must say good-bye. Give my compliments to Miss Gates.”

“Good-bye,” said Mrs. Gates, shaking hands with him.

As Mr. Jenkins always avoided, as long as possible, giving his business transactions a business appearance, he proposed to call on Mrs. Gates instead of saying, “If you will come to my office, we will consult as to any steps you may wish me to take.” The nature of the present appointment also left his office

hours free for other business that might present itself. Moreover, Mrs. Gates, in her volubility, was the sort of client who, if she called upon him in business hours, might actually succeed in taking out of him her money's worth.

On the other hand, Mrs. Gates was quite satisfied too. Mr. Jenkins might be of great use to her in a "friendly" way. If the matter had been turned at once into a stern business channel, it might have caused her to reflect upon possible consequences. She would, perhaps, have felt the necessity of deciding in her own mind between a husband for her daughter on one side, and no husband for her and a compromise on the other; that is, putting it down roughly. As matters stood, however, it was not necessary as yet to come to any, to say the least, embarrassing decision.

Mrs. Gates could float on in her little bark, comfortably and easily, without paying any fare, and without any special effort to reach a particular spot, with an inward conviction that she would ultimately be landed in a pleasant place.

Whenever Mrs. Gates thought of Frederick in connection with a lawyer, she thought of that auxiliary force only in the most indistinct way. The lawyer was a consoling prop, ready for her to avail herself of in any critical position that might arise. We often lean in life for a long time upon mere phantom props, that vanish when we require their practical support.

Already, in consequence of the merely friendly

conversation with Mr. Jenkins, her course concerning this matter had to take a more decided direction. "Had she better tell Arabella of this interview?"—a question thrust upon her which started a variety of reflections that had not been troublesome to her before, because no special decision was required. Little questions are sometimes just as difficult to decide as big ones. We ought to say "apparently little questions." When the object is to plant an oak-tree, for instance, the acorn is a very important thing.

Thus a good deal depended upon Mrs. Gates deciding whether Arabella should be admitted into the arranged legal conference or not. Mrs. Gates actually could not make up her mind what to do, so she came to no decision before she reached home.

When she came in Arabella jumped up and walked towards her, looking quite delighted, with a letter in her hand from Frederick, who had announced, at last, his arrival on the following day.

"Ma," she said, "here is a letter from Fred, who says he will be here to-morrow afternoon, between three and four."

"That's lucky for him," said Mrs. Gates, "for I am heartily tired of his shilly-shallying."

"I wonder, ma, what he has got to say?" said Arabella, looking at her mother half anxiously, as if she herself did not know what she should say to him, and required a little advice for her guidance.

"Try to bring him up to the scratch," said Mrs. Gates. "If you don't play your cards well, he'll slip

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conversation with Mr. Jenkins, her course concerning this matter had to take a more decided direction. "Had she better tell Arabella of this interview?"—a question thrust upon her which started a variety of reflections that had not been troublesome to her before, because no special decision was required. Little questions are sometimes just as difficult to decide as big ones. We ought to say "apparently little questions." When the object is to plant an oak-tree, for instance, the acorn is a very important thing.

Thus a good deal depended upon Mrs. Gates deciding whether Arabella should be admitted into the arranged legal conference or not. Mrs. Gates actually could not make up her mind what to do, so she came to no decision before she reached home.

When she came in Arabella jumped up and walked towards her, looking quite delighted, with a letter in her hand from Frederick, who had announced, at last, his arrival on the following day.

"Ma," she said, "here is a letter from Fred, who says he will be here to-morrow afternoon, between three and four."

"That's lucky for him," said Mrs. Gates, "for I am heartily tired of his shilly-shallying."

"I wonder, ma, what he has got to say?" said Arabella, looking at her mother half anxiously, as if she herself did not know what she should say to him, and required a little advice for her guidance.

"Try to bring him up to the scratch," said Mrs. Gates. "If you don't play your cards well, he'll slip

hours free for other business that might present itself. Moreover, Mrs. Gates, in her volubility, was the sort of client who, if she called upon him in business hours, might actually succeed in taking out of him her money's worth.

On the other hand, Mrs. Gates was quite satisfied too. Mr. Jenkins might be of great use to her in a "friendly" way. If the matter had been turned at once into a stern business channel, it might have caused her to reflect upon possible consequences. She would, perhaps, have felt the necessity of deciding in her own mind between a husband for her daughter on one side, and no husband for her and a compromise on the other; that is, putting it down roughly. As matters stood, however, it was not necessary as yet to come to any, to say the least, embarrassing decision.

Mrs. Gates could float on in her little bark, comfortably and easily, without paying any fare, and without any special effort to reach a particular spot, with an inward conviction that she would ultimately be landed in a pleasant place.

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through your fingers, that's all I can say. However, I shall have a word to say to him after you have done with him." (Here the lawyer loomed up in the distance, and Mrs. Gates felt supported accordingly.)

Arabella did not feel very much enlightened as to the precise course she was to pursue. It is very easy to say "play your cards well," and "bring him up to the scratch;" but when the game is taken in hand, and we try to bring things to an issue, we often find ourselves singularly thwarted.

Frederick had finally decided to surrender to Mrs. Gates, although not unconditionally. He had another reason, which made it very desirable that Mrs. Gates should be temporized with and kept quiet. His visits to Forrest Court had become more frequent of late, and he could not help feeling that Alice Forrester evinced a decided *penchant* for him. An alliance in that quarter would no doubt please his father very much, and be, as is commonly expressed, the saving of himself.

Suppose Mrs. Gates, in her stupidity, wrote to his colonel, and it had no other consequences than a social *exposé* at the mess-table for the sake of chaff. There was Wilmot, who, knowing a great deal of Frederick's character and affairs, did not look with complacency upon Frederick's improving his opportunities at Forrest Court. Wilmot might have it in his power to turn Lady Forrester, hitherto so remarkably well-disposed towards him, into a decided antagonist..

Nothing is more calculated to create a feeling of bitterness in gentlewomen than to learn that their *protégé* or favourite has defiled himself by a vulgar *liaison*. A discovery of that sort is about the most fatal that can happen to such a *protégé*. To be told that he is in the hands of the Jews is nothing at all when compared with a communication of the nature to which we have alluded.

Our pleasant positions in life are often more damaged by a little bit of news, conveyed behind our backs, than by the noisy firing of a whole broadside on the part of our enemies; and if Mrs. Gates had brought an action for breach of promise it might have damaged Frederick less in the eyes of Lady Forrester than any conversational whispers flitting about among society. For an action satisfactory motives, that is motives condemnatory to Mrs. Gates, might have been easily adduced. "Persons who show such a mercenary spirit as to bring an action for breach of promise might do anything," would be, for instance, one argument to be brought forward in favour of Frederick. Besides, an open broadside is a fair fight, while a damaging report is like doing battle with savages—you are a mark to them and they are none to you.

When the time had arrived for Frederick to make his appearance, Arabella's heart beat with anxious expectation: there was something so very unsatisfactory in her relation towards him, and although she was certainly, as we mentioned before, not averse to the pushing standpoint which her mother had

taken, she nevertheless always felt embarrassed when he came.

After a few false alarms at the street-door, Frederick made his appearance, and was received by Arabella alone. No doubt Mrs. Gates was not far off, but still she was not there when he came. Arabella looked very handsome—very, naturally; she had set herself off to the best advantage. She was dark, and her dress was of rich amber cashmere, in which she looked very charming, although the daughter of Mrs. Gates. If she had been placed socially and pecuniarily like Alice Forrester, Frederick would not have hesitated long in giving her the preference.

Frederick did not look his best. He had, whether from mental or bodily fatigue, a tired appearance. His complexion partook a little of the sallow, and the expression of his face was far from cheerful. Arabella noticed this at once, and, on welcoming him, exclaimed, "You don't appear to be glad to meet me; why, Frederick dear, you are quite gloomy!"

"No, no," said Frederick.

"Come, sit down on the sofa," said Arabella; and Frederick, putting his arm round her waist, led her to the sofa. They sat down together, and Frederick, keeping his arm round her, could not abstain from kissing her several times, passionately.

"Oh, Frederick dear," said Arabella, looking at him very tenderly, "I am so unhappy."

"Nonsense, my dear, we have all our troubles," replied Frederick, who avoided asking her the cause of her unhappiness.

"Where is your mother, dear?" asked Frederick.

"Ma? why, I expect her here every minute."

"D—n her," thought Frederick.

"I have been so uneasy about you. I thought you would never come to see me any more," said Arabella, a big tear glistening on her beautiful long eyelashes.

That tear was bewitching, and Frederick said—

"I *cannot* talk to you as I would, with your mother always about; can't you make an appointment to meet me somewhere, without your mother knowing anything about it?"

By this time Frederick had the privilege of wiping from Arabella's handsome face another tear.

The fair sex have a peculiar gift as regards the production of tears. It is said that they can start them at will and without a moment's notice. Tears serve them for a variety of purposes—sometimes they are Cupid's very arrows that transfix the hearts of their victims; at other times they make their appearance most *à propos* in argument, when the art of logic fails them, and assist effectually in attaining the fair pleader's end. In this instance, however, poor Arabella's tears were quite genuine, and Frederick felt that his persisting in trying to get Arabella to make the desired appointment would not do.

"Arabella, dear," he said, "come now, compose yourself. What is the matter now?"

"There's ma," said Arabella, half sobbing, "very impatient about our engagement lasting so long, and you know I dearly love you, and how I have always trusted you implicitly."

"Well," interrupted Frederick, "don't you trust me now?"—conscious of having given her reason for distrusting him. But, after all, Arabella did not wish to distrust him, so her distrust was only a cloud, not bigger than a man's hand, quickly chased away, and she took Frederick's hand with both hers and said, almost happy—

"Yes, Frederick dear, I do trust you, but do put an end to this dreadful feeling of suspense, and show ma that you are in earnest by telling the major and your mother of our engagement. Ma would be so pleased if your father and mother would call on us, you have no idea, it would pacify her so; and if even your circumstances did not allow you to fix a day for our wedding, it would place matters on a happier footing. As for me, God knows that, anxious as I am to be always with you, I willingly resign myself to any delay that circumstances may impose upon you."

"Believe me, my dear," Frederick said, "if I were to tell my father now of our engagement; instead of furthering our views—instead of making things pleasant, it would do the very reverse. You don't know my father; when he takes a thing in his head nothing can turn him from it. He says, 'an officer has no business to marry so young;' in fact, I have heard him say, many a time, that 'with the dangers and changes soldiers are exposed to they are no great catches for any woman;' but that is neither here nor there. He would be furious if I told him just now of our engagement."

"But why?" asked Arabella, astonished and scared. "Furious?" she added.

"Well, when I say furious," said Frederick, who had to try back, because he couldn't give the reason to Arabella which led him to his vehement exclamation, "I mean he would strongly disapprove of it, because he considers my income quite inadequate, at present, for marrying."

"Does he?" said Arabella, very good-naturedly. "Why, Frederick dear, you and I could live on very little!"

"Bless her innocence!" thought Frederick.

"I wouldn't mind living in the barracks with you in one room. Dear me, you don't know what we had to put up with after poor pa died!"

Frederick said, "My dear, you don't know what expenses a man in my position has; if we ourselves were content with ever so little we could not live in the way you fancy, and I remain in the army."

"No?" said Arabella, surprised.

"No," said Frederick. "My pay is but very little; my father is not rich—it is all he can do to make me the allowance he does, and that has not been sufficient as it is. To tell you the truth, I am in very great difficulties as regards money at present; there are some bills of mine overdue, and it is only with the greatest difficulty that I can get them held over. I am sorry to say I am so precariously placed that I cannot think of anything at the present moment but how to extricate myself from my embarrassments;

perhaps, in a few months, things may take quite another aspect and enable me to give them another turn."

Poor Arabella felt very sorry for Frederick. "And hadn't you better tell your father about your difficulties? I mean," suggested Arabella, "he might help you in getting out of your embarrassments. He is very fond of you and very proud of you, isn't he?"

"Arabella, my dear," said Frederick, in rather a subdued manner. "I am a very bad fellow."

"Oh, no," said Arabella, leaning towards him fondly, "that I am sure you are not."

"Yes, I am. My father has made me extra allowances several times, and I know on one or two occasions he had to submit to pecuniary sacrifices to do so. He could neither help me nor would I tell him," said Frederick.

"Oh, dear, what will you do?" said Arabella, rather anxiously, but only on Frederick's account, and not thinking at all of herself. "I wish I could help you. Oh, I wish I were rich—I never wished anything so much in my life."

"Well, I shall get over it," said Frederick, musingly; "it will take a good deal of management, though. We must have patience for a little longer, my dear," he said, leaning towards her and kissing her, when that very moment Mrs. Gates came in.

"Oh, that's the game we are at, are we?" exclaimed Mrs. Gates. "How d'ye do, Fred? I hope you have made it all right with my daughter?"

"I have explained to Arabella——"

"Explained!" said Mrs. Gates; "explaining again! why, you have been doing nothing else ever since you explained your attachment first to my daughter."

There was something ominous in this "my daughter," and it was said with great emphasis. She always said "Bella" formerly. Frederick, at the best of times, never felt very comfortable in Mrs. Gates's society. He knew that Arabella trusted him, but he thought that Mrs. Gates was suspicious as to his intentions.

"I have told Arabella how I am situated at present," said Frederick."

"I hope, Fred," said Mrs. Gates, "you didn't shirk any longer telling your father and mother of your engagement to my daughter; it is time that we should be getting on visiting terms; I am impatient to make the major's and Mrs. Danmer's acquaintance."

We cannot exactly describe Frederick's feelings, but we know they were altered from what they were when he was alone with Arabella. Fancy Mrs. Gates and the major and Mrs. Danmer on an equal social footing! More than that, a family connection! The major had nothing about him that would lead one to suppose that he could be the victim of a suicidal mania, but Frederick himself thought that the circumstance of Mrs. Gates claiming close family ties with his father would go far towards driving the major to blow his brains out.

Fancy the major giving his arm to Mrs. Gates, to take her in to dinner, and she saying, "We ain't such a bad-looking couple, are we, major? and if we had met before you fell in with your good lady, we don't know what might have happened, eh, major?" Frederick could sooner contemplate his gentle, refined mother tolerating Mrs. Gates, than his fastidious, aristocratic father.

Arabella came to the rescue by saying, "It is all right, ma; Frederick will do everything as we wish. I will tell you all about it by-and-by."

"You may rely upon it, Mrs. Gates," said Frederick, "that in a few months——"

"A few months!" exclaimed Mrs. Gates. "Well, I must confess you are a cool hand."

"Now, ma," said Arabella, "let Fred alone. He has troubles enough without our aggravating them."

"I know nothing about his troubles," said Mrs. Gates, "and surely I do not want to aggravate them; I only want Fred to act above-board."

"He will do everything that is right, I tell you, ma," said Arabella.

"It will not be long before things will take a more decided course," said Frederick.

"Well," said Mrs. Gates, apparently pacified, "how long are you going to stay in town, Fred?"

"I shall leave to-night again; I came only on your account," said Frederick.

"You never seem to stay but a day when you come up to town. Can't you get longer leave than

that? There is a flower-show at Kensington: I was in hopes you would take me and Bella there!"

"Who are you?" cried the parrot, reminding Frederick of a past not very edifying scene.

"It was all I could do, just to come up. In fact, I am here without leave. The colonel has shown great reluctance of late to let us go away."

"When shall we see you again?" inquired Mrs. Gates.

"Well, I don't know—in a month or so," said Frederick.

"In the mean time you will write often to me, won't you?" said Arabella, coaxingly. "I am always so glad to get a letter from you."

"Yes, my dear," said Frederick, who was now, since their *tête-à-tête* had been interrupted by Mrs. Gates, anxious to cut his visit short. He took out his watch, and said, "I have several little things to buy for some of the fellows down there, and if I don't go now I shall miss the train." So he kissed Arabella, but not Mrs. Gates: the night when they came home from the Philadelphia Hotel was an exception; the ladies had then also taken some champagne; but to-day Mrs. Gates would have had to go much out of her way to get Frederick to kiss her, in spite of the necessity on his part to follow a policy of conciliation towards her.

When Frederick had left Arabella and her mother, he felt miserable. If anything, he was fonder of Arabella than ever. She was so genuine. But

dear me, to marry her was out of the question. If Arabella stood quite alone in the world, and had had nobody to drag her down, he couldn't see his way clear to such an alliance. Then his money troubles depressed him. He thought of Alice Forrester; nothing seemed to go smooth with him. D——n it! How happy some fellows were! Some had money, title, everything; they were favoured on all sides.

What is it that makes Fortune so capricious? Where there are plenty of flowers she strews more, where there are none she heaps up thorns as if she resented the absence of flowers. Perhaps she thinks that the poorest of us might gather some, if not the choicest productions of the garden or hot-house, at least such as are accessible to everybody. God's gifts are everywhere, and Frederick Danmer had a very fair share of them; but he was one of those who "have eyes and see not, neither do they understand."

CHAPTER XVII.

TUDOR took his ticket for his place of destination, not omitting to take an insurance ticket—a prudential precaution, taken by most travellers nowadays who are not already insured in the Railway Passengers' Insurance Company, against accidents. He, however, reached the town where Frederick was stationed without any mishap, without being, as the newspapers say, "shaken," and which may mean anything short of being crushed to death. Frederick was on the platform to meet his new friend, for whom he had taken lodgings, according to Tudor's request. Tudor's coming down to pass the holidays with him was a decided step towards closer friendship.

"How do you do, my dear fellow?" said Frederick. "I am very glad to see you. Where's your luggage?"

Tudor, after warmly shaking hands with Frederick and inquiring how he had been since they last met, at once attended to his luggage, which consisted of only one portmanteau and a hat-box, as he was yet in a state of single blessedness. After the luggage

had been put on the cab, the small things inside, and the portmanteau with the driver on the box, and after Tudor had given the railway porter the fee against the regulations of the company, which is expected from gentlemen, the two friends drove to the lodgings Frederick had engaged. The sitting-room had a beautiful view on the river, and the evening sun threw a charming light on the hilly country opposite, which displayed an infinite variety of colours.

"Now," said Frederick, "you are as snug as a man can be. It is the best thing you could have done to take lodgings, for I hope you will make a long stay."

"Not longer than a fortnight, I think," replied Tudor.

"We will talk of that by-and-by," said Frederick. "You look pale from too much sedentary work, and you know under a month people do not derive any benefit from a change of air."

"Don't be too sure of that," said Tudor; "but as you say, we will decide about it later, when I have been here a week or so."

Frederick took out his watch, and said, "We dine at the mess in exactly an hour from this. Look there, to the right, there are the barracks—only five minutes' walk. Be punctual; and now good-bye for the present."

Tudor made his appearance in due time with Frederick, who introduced him to his brother officers.

"I say, Danmer," said one of the officers across the table, "when is the important event to take place? I hope we shall all get invitations to the wedding."

"Of course," said Danmer, who took the joke all the better because Wilmot happened to be absent, "and you shall have champagne enough to render you incapable of doing duty for a week."

This was a counter-joke, that alluded to a little incident known to all except the guests, and which caused some hilarity.

"What shall we do with ourselves to-night?" asked another officer of his neighbour.

"Why, there's the theatre," was the reply.

"I know their pieces by heart," said the officer who started the question, "and I believe if it were not for Miss Selby they might shut up altogether."

"They ought to be supported, though, for they are very poor," said another. "You know that little stout fellow who sings between the acts, 'Wait for the turn of the tide'? He borrows Tom's dress coat every evening for the occasion, and Tom found such a queer letter in the side-pocket." (Tom was the waiter at the Albion.)

"Why, what about?" asked several at once, in anticipation of a little amusement.

"I asked him to let me have it until to-morrow; here it is."

"Read it," said the youngest officer.

"DEAREST JIM" (he read),

"I write a few lines to say that we are all well, thank God; I got up yesterday for the first time, and me and the baby are doing very well. I am so thankful that none of us are laid up just now, for I am sorry to say that Lawyer Squeeze has sent the bailiffs into the house for the half-year's rent. Them landlords gives their business always into the hands of lawyers, who are as heartless as a stone; it is no use talking to them. Don't be down-hearted, dearest Jimmie, things might be worse, and I know we will get over it somehow. Give my kind regards to the marquis, and tell him that the little poodle he gave us is such a comfort to us. We are all so pleased with his tricks. All the children join me in sending their love to you. Take care of yourself.

"Your ever affectionate wife,

"JESSIE."

The officers were rather disappointed in their fun.

"Suppose," said the colonel, "we turn the tide for that poor devil. I don't mind heading the subscription with half a sovereign, what say you, Lord Charles?"

"With all my heart," replied Lord Charles; and in a remarkably short time more than the probable amount of the half-year's rent was subscribed for poor Jimmie, who, in spite of his being apparently connected with marquises, was on the brink of having his furniture sold by Lawyer Squeeze. Tudor, too, subscribed half a sovereign.

"By-the-by," said one of the officers, "there is a circus to-night; I quite forgot all about it."

"To be sure there is," said Lord Charles.

"Are there any of you fellows going?" inquired another.

"I think I shall go there with my friend, if he is not too tired from his journey," said Danmer.

"I will go with pleasure," said Tudor; "it will be quite a treat to see a circus in the country."

"In the country!" said Frederick. "In a day or two you will not know the difference between our town and London. You don't know how gay we are down here."

"I am quite prepared to enjoy myself," said Tudor, "although there is no place like London."

"I like London," said Lord Charles, "for a month or two in the season, but I should not like to live there all the year round."

The dinner passed very pleasantly, and afterwards Tudor, Frederick, and two other young officers went to the circus. The company had advertised themselves by the customary procession through the town in the morning: ladies in *tricot*, and one lady in riding habit, mounted on *the* horse of the company; gentlemen in armour; piebald horses and ponies; the triumphal car, ten-in-hand, with some queen or goddess at a perilous height at the top; and last, but not least, two clowns driving three zebras, unicorn fashion.

To Tudor it appeared that the audience evinced

an interest, a freshness, of which London audiences are devoid. It was evident that, with most of the people, the witnessing of the performance was quite an event. Ladies and gentlemen, horses and ponies, were acquitting themselves very creditably. The children were delighted with the clowns; it would have cured anybody of a fit of melancholy to hear their happy, hearty laughter.

All of a sudden there was a commotion. A child, a girl, on jumping from the back of a horse through a hoop, pasted over with paper, apparently from a sudden swerve which the horse made, missed her footing and was thrown with some violence on to the edge of the boarding which formed the circle, when Tudor, who sat close by, caught her, at the risk of bodily injury to himself, with both arms, and broke the fall. The poor girl, however, fainted in consequence of the shock. One of the clowns rushed to the spot (and even then was the object of merriment to some of the audience further off), took the girl out of Tudor's arms and carried her in through the doorway, which shut out the view to the audience. A few minutes afterwards they were apprised that the girl was not seriously hurt, which announcement was received with applause. Tudor had his coat torn and his arms bruised against the edge of the board. The moment the performance was over, the clown, who was the father of the young girl, came up to Tudor, and expressing his heartfelt gratitude to him for the service he had rendered,

requested him to step inside, as his little girl wanted to thank him personally. So Tudor and Frederick and the two other young men went in to see the little damsel, who was a beautiful little girl, with a pair of as laughing blue eyes as they ever beheld, and, excepting a bruise on the arm, of no consequence, she was not hurt. She shook hands with Tudor, and very prettily thanked him for the way in which he so readily came to the rescue, and expressed a hope that he was not hurt himself. Tudor felt gratified, as we all do after an act of heroism, however small, which ends to the satisfaction of all parties. He pitied the child on account of the danger to which her vocation exposed her, and after the young men had left the circus, he said to Frederick, "I have a great dislike to neck-breaking performances."

"Oh, that's nothing," said Frederick; "they are used to it."

"Like eels to skinning," observed one of the young officers.

"There are these acrobats who will perform at an alarming height, while they might show their agility and skill just as well at a reasonable distance from the ground, which, in case of accident, would reduce their danger considerably," said Tudor.

"But the danger is just the attraction; there are many performers on the tight rope," said Frederick, "who may possess great agility and skill, but there is only one who crossed the Niagara Falls."

"And there are women with babies in their arms

and others subject to hysterics who take a delight in witnessing such dangerous feats," said one of the young officers.

"Generally," said the other, "there is a great number of the audience exposed to considerable danger, for the ropes and tackle are fastened right over the heads of ever so many people, and if one of the performers falls, he is sure to injure some below."

"I am of opinion that such performances ought not to be tolerated on the part of the authorities," said Tudor.

"They will never stop it," said Frederick.

"I have often wondered whether it is vanity or mere anxiety for their daily bread that causes those fellows to risk their lives as they do," said one of the young officers.

"It is difficult to say," said Tudor. "People do not always follow a vocation of their own choice—in fact, very seldom; and when they have once adopted a particular calling they are helpless as to any other. There is that pretty little girl, for instance, that fell to-night; her father being a clown, no doubt determined her mode of earning her daily bread, whether she liked it or not."

"Quite so," said Frederick, "and I begin to think myself, for the very reason you mention—that children are brought up to such dangerous tricks, whether they like it or not—that the authorities ought to put a stop to them."

"Whither, oh, whither are we going now?" asked one of the young officers.

"Suppose we have a little bit of a supper at the Albion?" said Frederick.

"Oh, I hate the Albion," said Frederick's other young friend; "their whiskey has been abominable of late," he added.

"Their whiskey, is it?" said Frederick; "then your *bar dulcinea* has hurt your feelings, has she? Never mind, old fellow, there are as good fish in the sea as ever came out of it, and it is all the same to us where we go; shall we say to the Crown?"

"Yes, to the Crown," said his young friend; and to the Crown they went. The four young men sat down to a comfortable little supper. Some had brandy hot and others whiskey hot, according to their taste; and as the component parts of the little party, with Tudor, who was a perfect stranger to two of them, were not calculated to bring forth any conversation of a confidential nature on anything heavy or serious, anecdotes came in very *àpropos*.

Good anecdotes, and even stupid ones, provided their very stupidity makes you laugh, are often something more than conversational stop-gaps, when nothing can be substituted in their stead so appropriate for furnishing hilarity or intellectual little treats, without encroaching upon the social relations existing between the persons present, or exposing one to a possibly offensive line of argument, from sheer want of acquaintanceship with your neighbour.

Frederick went with Tudor as far as his lodgings, where the two young friends separated, to meet again the next day. A fortnight is not a very long time for shaping a newly cemented friendship to that use which Frederick wanted to make of it. He called on Tudor in the morning. Tudor was not a person who gave people the impression that he could be easily duped. Nor did Frederick think so.

"Well," said Frederick, "how did you like your new bed?"

"I slept very comfortably, thank you; I was more tired than I thought; the change of air, too, makes one sleepy."

"There are certain localities where persons, on freshly arriving, cannot keep their eyes open; I know of such a place in Sussex—very high land," said Frederick. "But we shall not give you much opportunity for snoozes down here," continued he; "you know we have a general election and races and balls!"

"I am very fortunate," said Tudor. "However, I should have found means to enjoy myself in your company and in this pretty place, with the military bands playing, without an election or balls. I begin to think," continued he, "that my life is a very monotonous one compared with yours: your very dinner at the mess-table is a pleasant daily episode, to say nothing of the many social enjoyments that are proffered to you in all directions."

"All is not gold that glitters," said Frederick.

"There is hardly a profession which taxes good-fellowship so much as mine."

"I do not understand you," said Tudor. "You mean that you have to put up with many a disagreeable from your superior officers, although socially their equal?"

"Bless me, no; in that respect we get on very comfortably, at least, in our regiment; but we have so many calls upon us, both professionally and socially, that some of the fellows get into a fix as to money matters sometimes, and then, from a sort of *esprit de corps*, the others come to the rescue. The coming races, for instance," continued Frederick, "are principally got up by us; there is a young fellow who could not have joined us if I had not helped him."

"That is very kind of you," said Tudor.

"Oh, not at all," said Frederick; "that is what we do for each other. There is another brother officer whom I helped out of a very ugly scrape by endorsing a bill for him."

"An accommodation bill!" exclaimed Tudor, with the instinctive horror which bankers have for that sort of "paper." "I trust, for your sake, that your friend is safe, and will meet it at maturity."

"Oh, yes," said Frederick; "he is as honest as daylight, and I am quite confident that he will pay the bill when it becomes due."

"But honesty alone," said Tudor, "does not pay bills; he must have the means too."

"He is very well connected," replied Frederick, "I assure you."

"I suppose you are all right, then," said Tudor. "Where bills are concerned, one cannot be too careful—they are such peremptory documents; the circumstance, however, of a person being well connected goes a great way to insure their safety."

Whether Tudor had learned this last little bit of commercial wisdom in Messrs. Snyder and Co's. bank, we are not prepared to assert. However, it appears to be of a very hazy nature; for when the bill is dishonoured, the connection, which had been looked upon as a sort of moral guarantee, is practically none whatever. We must suppose that, as the responsibility of taking bills for discount, or rejecting them, was not thrust upon him in the bank, he saw no reason to be dissatisfied with his theory in that respect.

Sometimes we possess garments which we never wore, and upon which we look as useful clothes till we try them on and find they are of no use; they do not fit. So his advice to Frederick, to be careful, savoured much of that wise-acredom which is so peculiar to theory, especially in young men, who, as we know, can talk about many things with exceeding cleverness to-day, and act the reverse to-morrow when temptation comes, or when they are otherwise placed in a critical position.

Frederick had what is called the small end of the wedge in; as time went on and opportunity would offer, he was prepared to give it an occasional knock, and then finally drive it in completely and securely. He is not the only one who hit upon the expedient of

playing the part of a good-natured fellow in order to succeed in victimizing others.

Perhaps we are too severe upon Frederick, for he took no delight in victimizing others. It is the old story, if we do not attend to our garden, ill weeds will grow apace and go over a space of ground that we little dreamt of in the beginning.

"With regard to the election," said Tudor, "what are your town-folks down here—are they conservative or radical?"

"Well, if you ask me, I must confess it is more than I can tell—politics are not my forte; I should say, though, that those who have nothing will always be radicals, and those who have something, conservatives. But you will have many opportunities to study politics during your stay, to your heart's content. One of the gentlemen who is going to stand for this county is a particular friend of mine," said Frederick, "Sir Herbert Forrester, the head of a very old county family. See, there he goes," he exclaimed, "that is his phaeton. Fine pair of horses, are they not?"

"Splendid!" answered Tudor, who was very fond of horses and riding, and was a capital horseman.

"I wonder whether my friend is driving to the barracks; if so, it is to call upon Wilmot or me. Come, let us go and see," said Frederick, and the two friends went towards the barracks.

Frederick was right. Sir Herbert had called for the purpose of seeing him, and was just driving out of the barrack-yard when Frederick and Tudor walked

in. Sir Herbert stopped the horses, gave the reins to his man, and jumped off the phaeton. After the usual shaking of hands, etc., Sir Herbert said—

“Have you heard from the major?”

“Not for a day or two past,” said Frederick.

“Then you will hear the news through me,” said Sir Herbert.

“What news?” asked Frederick, rather startled.

“Very good news,” said Sir Herbert; “my mother has invited the major and Mrs. Danmer and your sister to spend a few weeks with us, and I am delighted to say they have accepted the invitation.”

For a moment Frederick was disturbed in his mind, for he did not quite see how his father's presence, and that of his mother and sister too, would affect his little plans concerning Tudor—a circumstance, altogether unforeseen, which might prevent him from devoting his time to him as he wished.

“My mother had long intended to call upon Mrs. Danmer and the major,” continued Sir Herbert, “but as, for some reason or other, she always postponed her journey to London, she determined to write to them, which she did, sending them the invitation, and requesting them to waive ceremonies, as she herself did.”

“I am sure,” said Frederick, who had recovered from his slight mental shock, “they will be very much obliged to Lady Forrester; the country will be quite a treat to them all.”

“We expect them to-morrow evening, and I shall

be at the station to fetch them," said Sir Herbert; "no doubt you will be there, too?" he added.

"Certainly," said Frederick. "I dare say I shall have letters from them to-day, but to make assurance doubly sure, pray what time do you expect them?"

"At ten minutes past five," said Sir Herbert. "Then I'll see you to-morrow; of course you will dine with us. Good-bye."

"Good-bye," said Frederick, and Sir Herbert drove away.

"Come in," said Frederick to Tudor, who had waited at a little distance. "I must see whether I have got letters from home."

So the two young men walked into the barracks and to Frederick's room. A letter from Emily was awaiting him. She seemed delighted at the prospect of a few weeks' stay in the country, especially at so lovely a place as Forrest Court; her mother, too, was very much pleased. Her dream, though, was hovering before her mind's eye.

"Dear Frederick,"—to quote one passage from her letter,—“how happy I should be at this meeting if I could divest myself of the feeling that has very forcibly come over me of late, and which tells me that you are in greater difficulties than you are willing to confide to me. Sometimes I am quite depressed when I think of you. I hope there is nothing in your affairs that cannot be satisfactorily arranged after a short time. I repeat it: life would be so pleasant to me just now if I could only feel reassured on your

account. Dear papa is in so content and serene a frame of mind, I tremble at the idea of any unpleasant revelation concerning you being made to him during his stay with the Forresters." And in a P.S., Emily wrote, "I am so curious to know what sort of girls Sir Herbert's sisters are. Burn this."

And Frederick did burn her letter in the course of the evening.

"What does she mean? Did anybody write her an anonymous letter? and if so, of what nature—concerning Mrs. Gates, or the money-lender?" thought Frederick. "I shall have the pleasure of introducing you to my family," said he to Tudor, "in a day or two; in fact, at the earliest opportunity."

"I am very much obliged to you," said Tudor, "but I hope that in no way you will inconvenience yourself on my account, and that you will devote your time to them just as if I were not here."

"Leave that to me, my boy," said Frederick: "no one shall go short of my society. Shall we take a stroll? you have seen nothing yet of our town."

And Frederick took his friend on a general tour of inspection.

CHAPTER XVIII.

It is pleasant to go on a visit to such people as the Forresters—a visit that promises not only a change of air and scene, but also an exchange of ideas.

It is said of Heine, the poet, that on a friend calling on him in Paris, and asking him how he felt, he answered, "Very stupid." "How is that?" said his friend. "So-and-so was here, and we exchanged ideas."

The Forresters were not like the Neilsons, for instance, who left you rather the worse for the exchange. Sometimes we feel highly pleased, and benefited accordingly, by a change of intelligent listeners to whom we can, with a sense of being appreciated, once more communicate thoughts and experiences which to gather and arrive at is the work of years.

Lady Forrester was an intellectual, highly cultivated woman. Her daughters, although very different in temperament and character from each other, were also highly cultivated and clever. If Lady Forrester had been known never to offer her guests more than weak

tea and thin slices of bread and butter, it would not have stood in the way of her being the centre of a *coterie* of witty and intellectual men and women. We mention this merely to convey to our readers that it was in Lady Forrester's power to attract certain social elements through her individuality, and not in consequence of her surroundings alone. But she did not desire to be habitually the centre of such a *coterie*, perhaps she had an objection to *toujours perdrix*.

Sir Herbert and his sister Alice drove to the station in an open carriage; a pony phaeton awaited the latter, to drive Emily home, and a waggonette was sent for the luggage.

The first thing Emily did was to look for Frederick on the platform. She caught sight of him standing by the side of Sir Herbert, chatting and laughing, apparently quite happy, which relieved her mind greatly. Dear Emily was but too willing to gather auspicious indications for the dispelling of the cloud which hovered over her concerning her brother. Both Mrs. Danmer and Emily enjoyed the drive much. The weather was beautiful, and whether we believe in omens or not, it is always a good sign to have fine weather when wind and rain would interfere with our enjoyment. The major looked the picture of health and contentment. He had every reason to anticipate much pleasure from so congenial a visit.

Alice and Emily, after having, on meeting, examined each other with peculiar interest, for which, if they had been very confidential with us, they would have

been able to give us a satisfactory explanation, and with which, perhaps, their brothers had something to do, were in a fair way of becoming great friends. Emily took quite a fancy to the pony, and Alice placed it specially at her disposal during her stay at Forrest Court.

Lady Forrester received the major and his wife and daughter with great cordiality.

Amongst the guests at dinner were Mr. William Budd, before the dissolution an M.P. and leader of the radical party in that neighbourhood, a special friend of Sir Herbert's, in spite of politics; and Mr. Sherbourne, the historian. There was also Lady Fanny Thorne, the popular novelist, Sir Herbert seemed to be quite happy by the side of Emily; while, apparently, Frederick had an easy task to interest fair Alice in his conversation. The general conversation turned on colonial life and military service.

"I have seen a good deal of it," said the major, in answer to an observation of Lady Forrester's—"more than I ever wish my son to see; the laurels to be won are not adequate to the hardships, sufferings, and dangers to which the soldier is exposed in most of our settlements, especially where an inferior race is our foe."

"I quite agree with you," said Mr. Budd. "I am of opinion that our white soldiers are too good to fight savages."

"The Americans furnish us with the best example for conquering savages," said Mr. Sherbourne. "Upon

a coarse block we must put a coarse wedge ; the United States conquer their territory by civilian settlers, who are equally expert in the use of the gun and the axe."

"In a war like the one we have lately seen between France and Germany, where the greatest issues to the civilized world are at stake, and which cannot be fought but by soldiers of a regular army, an officer feels himself at his right post, whatever aversion he may have to war through feelings of humanity ; but the Maoris, for instance, had better be put down by diggers and settlers, after the example of the United States," said the major.

"After all," said Frederick, "I should not mind tasting a few adventures, even against savages ; we feel very dull doing nothing but garrison duty."

Alice looked at him with ill-disguised astonishment, which did not escape Lady Forrester. How could Frederick express a willingness to leave England under any circumstances, especially this evening, when he sat by the side of such a golden-haired angel as Alice ?

"If you distinguish yourself against savages, and I live," said Mr. Sherbourne, laughingly, "I will take care to immortalize your bravery."

"Thank you," said Frederick ; "but I think that Lady Fanny would be the fitter historian of the two, for there might be more of adventure than of bravery to record."

"Oh, Lady Fanny is a more formidable competitor

of mine than is generally supposed ; the fact is, what are we historians but romancers ! ” said Mr. Sherbourne.

“ Really,” said Lady Forrester, “ your modesty has no bounds ; what would the world do without you ? ”

“ True ; but nevertheless,” said Mr. Sherbourne, “ the novelist is not unfrequently the truer historian.”

“ And the more pleasing,” said Lady Fanny, “ because, if he has any truths to administer, he gives them in convenient doses and properly sugared over.”

“ As to that,” said Mr. Budd, “ the masses can stand any amount of abuse—in fact, the more the better.”

“ I quite understand that,” said the major, “ if you abuse them *en masse* the individual agrees with you, while he thinks he is an exception.”

“ Quite so,” said Mr. Sherbourne ; “ but as to administering truth, there is the difficulty. The historian is very much in the same dilemma in which Pontius Pilate was when he asked ‘ What is truth ? ’ Even as to contemporary history, say the late Franco-German war, different sides, different standpoints may be taken, and consequently versions given of the same events and from the same causes differ ; it is, therefore, well not to overrate history by looking upon it as if it could furnish us an infallible truth, for it never can do that.”

“ Well,” said Mr. Budd, “ if it cannot do that I shall select Lady Fanny as my future historian.”

"Thank you very much," said Lady Fanny. "Of course," she added, looking rather slyly, "you want a little fiction intermixed with a reasonable quantity of truth."

"Certainly," said Sir Herbert, "my friend, Mr. Budd, would like you to draw on your imagination as regards the abuse which he administers to the masses, for I assure you he is the greatest adept in the art of saying pleasing things to them."

"Now we are getting into politics," said Lady Forrester; "but we shall have plenty of that for the next week or two."

"And Sir Herbert will have an opportunity," said the major, "of showing whether he holds with flattering or abusing the masses."

"Yes," said Lady Forrester, laughing; and by way of turning the conversation from the dull ponderosity which politics threatened to assume in the eyes of the ladies, she said, addressing herself to Mrs. Danmer, "I wonder whether you have brought us any new fashions from London—our present ones are so ridiculous and exaggerated?"

"Fashions," said Mrs. Danmer, smiling, "are a necessary evil; it is useless to ask, 'Are they becoming or are they not becoming?'"

"Yes," said Lady Forrester, "fashions are not a matter of taste, but a question of conformity with the rest of the world."

"What would become of trade," said Sir Herbert, "if ladies wore dresses to suit their own individual

tastes, and never changed them till they had a fair wear and tear?"

"I suppose," said Mr. Budd, "the drapers would sell less and make less bad debts."

With this kind of light conversation the dinner party passed very agreeably. After all had' repaired to the drawing-room (the gentlemen did not sit long over their wine), the beauty of the evening was considered an inducement for walking in the grounds.

Sir Herbert was determined not to leave Emily, and Frederick and Alice walked behind them. Lady Forrester had entered into conversation with the major and Mrs. Danmer, while Miss Forrester had joined the other guests. Since Lady Forrester had seen Emily, and her son by the side of her, which latter circumstance gave her an opportunity to make her own observations, she did not think it improbable that the two families might become connected by closer ties. Emily had made a most favourable impression upon her. She thought the whole family charming—the major, Mrs. Danmer, Emily, and Frederick.

"Don't you think," said Alice to Frederick, "that the emotion which the setting sun causes is rather a sad one, while the rising sun impresses one with a feeling of gladness?"

Alice looked on Frederick's face with a tinge of melancholy in her eyes. Frederick had never, before this, given the respective emotions caused by the rising and the setting of the sun, any attention; in fact, his bent of mind was not in that direction.

"I never cared much about the rising sun," he thought. "Oh, yes, very different impressions," he said; "and more people see the sun set than see it rise."

"Yes, and I am inclined to think that there is more sadness in this world than joy," said Alice.

Frederick did not quite see why such a lovely creature as Alice, who had youth, beauty, birth, and money, should be inclined to think so.

"You look sometimes very sad," she added.

"I?" said Frederick. There was something exceedingly soft and winning in the manner in which Alice spoke these words, and it seemed to convey to him the idea that she wanted him to know that she took a more than ordinary interest in him. Some disagreeable thoughts crossed his mind, but a vista seemed to open to him, calculated, if properly followed, to lead him out of much trouble. "You are a close observer, Miss Alice," said Frederick; "still, we ought to bear our troubles alone."

"Do you think so?" said Alice. "In my opinion, there is nothing more fatal than isolation, either in joy or in sorrow."

"Pardon me if I cannot agree with you altogether," said Frederick; "we ought not to object to share our joys with our fellow-creatures, while we must naturally shrink from burdening them with our grief."

Alice thought Frederick a noble being, and timidly looked at him with a mingled feeling of tenderness and admiration.

"But when we have friends who long to share our sorrows," said Alice, "it is doing them an injustice, it is unkind to withhold from them what they would naturally consider a privilege, the privilege of sympathizing with those they care for."

They walked on a little in silence, absorbed in their own reflections, while Sir Herbert, being with Emily, in front of them, had addressed her with—"I cannot tell you how much obliged I feel to the major and Mrs. Danmer for having accepted my mother's invitation to spend some weeks with us."

"I assure you the obligation is quite on papa's and mamma's side, and they are quite aware of it," said Emily.

"Does not the country look beautiful?" said Sir Herbert, who did not think it the less beautiful because he could identify himself with what they saw before them with a different feeling from what a country gentleman would, who looks upon his mortgaged acres and does not know where to find the money to work them properly withal.

"Lovely!" said Emily; "it gives me so much pleasure to see the birds hop and stalk about, 'they toil not, neither do they spin,' and their feeding seems to be to them mere recreative exercise."

"Quite so," said Sir Herbert, "they are irresponsible creatures; but as regards man, however much he may possess, his share of toiling and spinning is allotted to him, you may rest assured. There is myself, for instance, Miss Danmer, the interests of my estates keep my mind constantly employed."

"I have no doubt," said Emily; "and everything is beautifully kept, indicating a presiding spirit that is thoroughly in earnest."

"Of course my steward or agent is a capital man of business, and I consider myself fortunate to have such a man in my service; still, things would never be looked after according to my conceptions of what they ought to be, if I did not look into the details," said Sir Herbert.

"I can quite understand that," said Emily.

"There are few people that are thorough in this world," said Sir Herbert, "and I have often wondered how many people manage to get their living at all."

"True," said Emily; "but in many cases what we might be induced to take for a want of thoroughness is merely to be ascribed to a different standpoint which another person takes from ours."

Sir Herbert looked at Emily with a look of gratified surprise, for Emily had not only not disappointed him, but given him an indication of a depth of thought, which betrayed to him that she was intellectually as sterling as she was physically beautiful.

"You are a charming philosopher," said Sir Herbert, looking at her smilingly and tenderly, which looks and words made Emily slightly blush. "I never viewed the question in that light before; we may lay stress upon a point, which may naturally appear to others unessential."

"What a beautiful pheasant!" cried Emily, pointing to one which they scared by their approach.

"Ah, yes, they are splendid birds," said Sir Herbert. "I hope to afford the major some sport this shooting season."

"Not if I have any influence with papa," said Emily, very pleasantly and gently, but firmly.

Sir Herbert was rather taken aback. "I beg your pardon, Miss Danmer; I do not quite understand you," he said.

"Perhaps you will think me eccentric, or bold in advancing an opinion so entirely opposed to an existing traditional custom, but I do not hold with gentlemen taking pleasure in shooting," said Emily.

"Excuse me, but you surprise me. You are not a follower of the doctrine of Pythagoras? You do not believe in the transmigration of souls?" asked Sir Herbert.

"That is a question far beyond me," said Emily, "and as yet I have not found it necessary for my spiritual welfare to try to sift it. I take for the opinion I have expressed quite a different standpoint?"

"But what earthly reason can you advance? Game must be shot, fish must be caught, and foxes must be hunted. If we do not kill and eat them, they will eat what ought to serve us for food, or kill us and eat us."

"Certainly," said Emily, "they must be killed, no doubt, but that is not my point of view."

"But what is your point of view?" asked Sir Herbert, betraying rather more impetuosity than was agreeable to him to remember immediately afterwards.

"My point of view is," said Emily, very softly and quietly, "that shooting and killing ought to be looked upon as a disagreeable necessity, as a duty with which no pleasure possibly can be connected, as a duty"—here Emily raised her voice a little—"that ought to be performed with the utmost despatch and the least possible amount of cruelty, by men whose business it is to do so, and not by gentlemen whose pleasure it is."

For a moment Sir Herbert did not know what to think; he felt like a man who has been knocked out of a boat and is on the brink of being drowned, and then he instantly remembered that he could swim.

"Ah, but if the game must be killed, it is all the same to the game who kills it," he said.

"I am afraid," said Emily, smiling, "you cannot shake my opinion; where the killing is made a business out of a necessity, the amount of torture is logically reduced to a minimum. The butcher does not take the ox and let him loose again, as the gentleman the stag out of a cart, to make the noble animal suffer not one death, but hundreds of death agonies while he hunts it. Where the hunt is a necessity—that is, where, for instance, in a wild forest a wild boar must be hunted for the purpose of being caught at all,—there is sense in hunting; but when a stag which you have already a prisoner is to be let loose again, to gratify men's pleasure in hunting, what is termed sport seems to me simply to be a demoralizing cruelty."

These last words were spoken with dignity by Emily, and Sir Herbert thought she looked like a queen. His admiration for her was not in the least diminished, although he was not the man to allow the arguments of a young lady, however tender his feelings might be towards her, to eradicate, both stem and root, from his being what was looked upon by him and his ancestors as a kind of privileged distinction appertaining to his class, as a recreation in which the "boor" was only allowed to participate in the sense of the peasant who was permitted to go with the boating party on condition of his helping to pull the boat all the way up stream. He did not reflect that what in former times required courage, and was consequently considered the privilege and occupation of the aristocracy, is now positive cruelty, that ought to be spurned by gentlemen. Still, he made a compromise with his fair antagonist, quite in accordance with the fashion of this world, by shifting the question on to a ground where he was no loser.

"I have often expressed my disapprobation of ladies taking a delight in pigeon-shooting," said Sir Herbert; "it is abominable."

"I should not like to be guilty of so gross an abuse of the epithet 'lady' as to bestow it upon such persons as take a *delight* in shooting pigeons," said Emily.

"It is astonishing, though, to think to what extent fashionable women patronized it," said Sir Herbert.

"Fashion is such a tyrant," said Emily, "that

some palliation may be found in the circumstance that many joined as slaves to fashion rather than from any liking for the cruel pastime."

"Decidedly; if ladies submit to be made hideous by grotesque fashions, as regards their outward appearance, what else will they not blindly follow where the same master leads?" said Sir Herbert, rather boldly; but as Emily laughed very good-naturedly and approvingly, he joined her in a hearty laugh.

While Emily and her companion thus conversed, Lady Forrester and Mrs. Danmer and the major, with their children walking before them, seemed to be in a very happy mood, which, if it did not give itself utterance in words, found expression in happy looks and the general tone of their conversation.

"Really, Lady Forrester," said the major, "this is a magnificent place."

"And how lovely the lake looks!" said Mrs. Danmer. "I admire a sheet of water; it sets the landscape off as pearls set off dark hair."

"Yes," said Lady Forrester, "it is a fine place, and my son is a very efficient steward."

"And a humane one, I should think," said the major; "for I observed in our drive here that the style of cottages he is building are erected with a sense of great consideration for the comforts as well as the necessities of human beings."

"Certain comforts are necessities," said Lady Forrester, "but it is only civilization that stamps them as necessities."

"You are quite right," said the major, emphatically, "and these poor cottagers would never have the heart, if they had the sense, to procure themselves such comforts as you provide for them, whether they will or not."

"I hardly know how to look upon this question," said Lady Forrester; "there are many who do not show that appreciation which one anticipated they would show."

"Nothing is a greater proof to me of the necessity of conservative laws," said the major, "even for the sake of the lower classes, than this very want of appreciation you allude to; they do not know what is wholesome and comfortable, and it must be administered to them somewhat on the principle upon which Sam Slick sold his clocks—that is, by leaving one on the mantelpiece where the people did not want to buy, until they became so accustomed to the use of it that they could not part with it afterwards."

"I do not know," said Mrs. Danmer, quietly; "human beings prefer, as a rule, dry bread and salt where they are their own masters, to much superior fare when it is supplied under circumstances which make them think that they are not free agents."

"I think Mrs. Danmer is right," said Lady Forrester, "for how many servants have we not had within the last ten years that preferred toil and poverty on their own account, to comparatively easy work and no anxiety in service?"

"Well, yes," said the major, "the question may

be viewed from that point; but then, it may be also said that human nature longs for what it does not possess—the master covets the servant's mind free from care, and the servant envies his master's power to command and to dispose."

"No doubt, major," said Lady Forrester; "and I long to give up my responsibilities as head housekeeper at Forrest Court, by being superannuated as dowager."

This remark of Lady Forrester's started in the minds of both the major and his wife a train of ideas to which they gave no utterance, but with which, especially, the major's fondest hopes had begun to be bound up. In the whole kingdom there was not a person he knew, of whom would approve so heartily for a son-in-law, as Sir Herbert Forrester. He was, in the major's eyes, in every respect the beau ideal of an English gentleman. What thousands covet without the slightest chance of ever attaining it, he had.

He was the head of an *old* county family, with a title and unencumbered estates. He had good looks, good health, and youth. His character was unimpeachable and most reliable. No wonder that the major would think his daughter fortunate if she became Lady Forrester. Not that he did not think Emily fully deserving of, and thoroughly fit for, such a position; but desert and fitness very frequently cannot command their proper place.

The whole party had by this time assembled on the

edge of the lake. There was a kind of tacit but general expectation amongst all that something should be proposed. The evening was charming. There was a moon expected; she had not made her modest appearance yet. The sun, in majestic calmness, sent his farewell rays gloriously over the landscape, and the placid waters of the lake reflected clearly the objects, reversed.

"Suppose the gentlemen row us over to the island. It is such a lovely evening, and there is a moon; I think it would be charming," said Alice.

"It is all very well for syrens, whose element is the lake, to propose a water party, but they must not expect to be supported in their suggestion by a landsman of my dimensions," said Mr. Sherbourne, jocularly pointing to the broad surface of his waistcoat.

"I will take you over first," said Sir Herbert, "and then come back with my boat for some of the ladies."

"I am much obliged to you," said Mr. Sherbourne. "I ought to be more of a sailor, though, for I am very much like them in one particular."

"In what?" asked Mr. Budd.

"I cannot swim," answered Mr. Sherbourne.

"Well, it is an extraordinary thing," said Sir Herbert, "that most sailors cannot swim!"

"How very odd!" said some of the ladies.

"Don't make a Robinson Crusoe of me, Sir Herbert, when you have got me over there, by pushing treacherously off and leaving me on the island without a Friday," said Mr. Sherbourne.

"Oh, you would not be without a Friday," said Mr. Budd, "for this is Friday;" which remark served to create a laugh amongst the party.

"Friday! Is it?" said Lady Fanny, "and we are so foolhardy as to embark on a voyage!" which observation, in its turn, augmented the hilarity, to which the company were generally disposed.

All crossed safely over, and in convenient numbers, in Sir Herbert's two boats.

"What do you say now, Lady Fanny?" said Mr. Budd. "The voyage is over, and we are all safe, in spite of the bugbear, Friday."

"Not at all," said the major, "we have to return yet. We must not halloo until we are out of the wood."

"The ides of March are come but not gone," said Lady Fanny.

"What a curious thing is superstition!" said Mr. Sherbourne, musingly.

"Superstition!" exclaimed Mr. Budd, "is well-nigh exploded in our present age."

Mr. Sherbourne looked incredulous.

"Yes," said Sir Herbert, "it is high time that useless beliefs should be banished; they are fostered by weakmindedness and sickly imaginations."

"And still," said his former fair antagonist, Emily, "there seems to be less objection to a superstitious than to a sceptical mind."

"You are right," exclaimed Lady Forrester and Mr. Sherbourne simultaneously.

"Superstition," continued Lady Forrester, "what-

ever its definition or its errors may be, denotes at least a mind devoid of that intolerable self-satisfaction and pride of intellect which the modern sceptic so delights to parade."

"I beg pardon, Lady Forrester," said Mr. Budd, "this is an age of inquiry and reform, the masses are awakening out of their long slumber of dark ignorance to the potency of science, and in my opinion it is better to attribute to natural causes phenomena which, when ascribed to supernatural causes, only lead us into error."

"There is something in what you say, Budd," said Mr. Sherbourne; "but what is 'natural' and what is 'supernatural'? When science can boast of being able to ascribe to natural causes, satisfactorily, all phenomena that have presented themselves to mankind, science may then call 'natural' what we now call 'supernatural.'"

"Certainly," said Lady Forrester; "in that sense the supernatural is only our ignorance of the natural."

"As savages," said Emily, "would take the effect of the telegraph to be caused by supernatural powers."

"What is that?" said several ladies and gentlemen of the company.

"A supernatural cry like the cry of the banshee," said Lady Fanny.

During the conversation, of which we have recorded part, and in which all present were much interested, the sun had departed imperceptibly, and the moon had risen steadily in her gentle grandeur, had changed

her orange yellow into cream colour, and threw her resplendent light on the waters, forming to the beholder a fairy bridge of silvery sparks across the lake.

Another cry was heard.

There was great consternation. Alice and Frederick were missing. Alice had suggested a row on the water to Frederick, and as the company were agreeably absorbed in conversation, their absence was not noticed. Frederick rowed and Alice steered. Finally she directed the boat's head to the opposite shore, where a weeping willow was overhanging the banks most picturesquely. On Frederick trying to push the boat along under the branches, Alice, by some inexplicable *contretemps*, held on by the willows, which partly dragged her off her seat and inclined the boat on one side; and unfortunately, Frederick, too, had, to avoid a collision with the trunk of another tree projecting over the water, to lean simultaneously on the same side, which made the boat capsize and precipitated them both into the water.

It was Alice who had uttered the two cries which they heard. Frederick was a good swimmer and very alert. He managed in an instant to push the boat away from the shore, and to clear himself for action. He contrived to catch Alice by her floating dress first and then by her waist. The banks near the spot were not high, but inconveniently perpendicular for getting out under the circumstances. A little further off, however, he succeeded in scrambling out with his precious burden. He laid her on the

turf. Poor Alice looked lifeless. He was horrified, believing her for the moment to be really dead. In his fright he knew not what to do. How fragile and helpless she looked as she lay in death-like stillness, if not death itself!

"Dear Alice!" he murmured, as, kneeling on the grass, he bent anxiously over her. After a few moments, to his great joy he found she still breathed. For some little time she showed no other sign of life. "Dear Alice!" he again murmured, as he continued to kneel by her side and to press her cold hands between his own scarcely less cold ones.

Suddenly she opened her eyes, and a faint colour tinged her pale cheek as she saw Frederick bending over her with anxious looks. "Where am I?" she said. "What has happened? Oh, mamma!"

Frederick still tenderly held her hand, and with his other arm raised her head. He tried to reassure her, telling her of the upsetting of the boat, and that Lady Forrester and Sir Herbert would soon be there.

The whole accident and Alice's recovering her consciousness occupied but a very short time, though it had appeared long to Frederick, in his fears for Alice; and just then a voice called over from the island—it was Sir Herbert's—"Alice! Alice!" Frederick answered, "All well! all right!"

Sir Herbert was relieved from great fear, and repeated Frederick's reply. He at once took the boat left at his disposal, and rowed Lady Forrester and Mrs. Danmer to the other side. They found Alice

recovered from her insensibility, but very weak and exhausted, and shivering from the cold and immersion. After fondly chiding her for putting herself into such danger, Lady Forrester urged her to try to walk the short distance to the house as the best means of preventing her from suffering bad consequences from the chill and wet. Sir Herbert had brought his pocket-flask, which could always be replenished in the fishing-house, and insisted on her swallowing a small quantity of the brandy mixed with water, while to Frederick he administered a glassful neat, with the advice to make the best of his way to the house, as his clothes also were saturated. Alice, leaning on Sir Herbert and her mother, reached home, and immediately retired to bed, and Lady Forrester at once sent for their family doctor.

Alice was so fragile and so impressionable that it was the custom in her family to guard her carefully from every shock and worry; and the upsetting of the boat, which in reality had not been attended with much danger to its occupants where it had occurred, was looked upon by them all as a serious accident, which even yet might have sad consequences; and Frederick's having brought Alice nearly lifeless to land was magnified by their love for her, and their fears, into an act of heroism, and he was thanked and extolled accordingly—rather to his embarrassment. He escaped by going to bed, as advised. A man was despatched in a dog-cart, with a note to his servant in the barracks, desiring him to send him a change of
bes.

The rest of the company were conveyed by degrees from the lovely little island, their spirit of hilarity subdued by the untoward incident; the night, too, became cooler, and, both from physical and mental causes, they felt as if they had been immersed into the lake themselves.

The doctor arrived, and after seeing Alice, gave his opinion that she would be better in the morning; and the gentlemen, left to themselves for the remainder of the evening, were not sorry to have some brandy-and-water also, on the strength of this reassuring opinion.

"Mamma," said Alice to Lady Forrester that evening in her bed-room, "I cannot explain to myself what caused me to be so awkward. Mr. Danmer might have lost his life through me. It is too horrible to think of. I am bound to him in everlasting gratitude for his noble behaviour."

"My child," said Lady Forrester, "compose yourself now; you require a little rest, and you will be much more comfortable in the morning."

"Mamma?" asked Alice again.

"Well, my child?"

"Is Frederick Danmer quite comfortable, not suffering?"

"Quite well," said Lady Forrester. "He had to go to bed because no clothes belonging to any one in the house would fit him, and he had no change with him," she added laughingly. So saying, she left Alice to herself and her reflections.

Alice felt thankful for the providential escape which both Frederick and herself had had, and aided by a composing draught, administered by the doctor, she fell into a refreshing slumber. Still, she dreamt all night of the incident, or rather accident; and ever present to her seemed Frederick's look of tender anxiety as he held her hand when she recovered consciousness. Her dreams lacked coherence and consecutiveness, and partook of that character of repetition which great physical or psychological impressions on us are apt to produce.

END OF VOL. I.

